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PREFACE.

THE delay which has attended the publication of this volume arose chiefly from a desire to profit by the labours of Egyptian antiquaries, and more especially the discoveries expected to arise from the study of hieroglyphical inscriptions. That the hopes of the learned on this head have been disappointed, it does not fall to my lot to be the first to record. The sanguine anticipations cherished by those who relied on the skill of Champollion, have, generally speaking, been succeeded by a painful conviction that history and chronology will never reap any advantages from the ingenious industry of Young, the profound erudition of Klaproth, and the valuable collections of Salt and Wilkinson. A cloud has fallen upon the land of the Pharaohs, prior at least to the period of the Hebrew exode, which it is feared the brightest beams of modern literature will not have strength either to penetrate or to dispel.

But although the researches of the historian may derive no material aid from the insculped records of ancient Egypt,

there is some ground to expect that the interests of learning will be advanced by the study of hieroglyphics, viewed in connection with the origin of alphabetical signs. The ingenious speculations of Dr Lamb of Cambridge, and of Dr Wall, the Hebrew Professor at Dublin, seem calculated to throw a new light on one of the most interesting subjects to which the attention of grammarians can be directed.

My undertaking, so far as it was intended to unite the works of Shuckford and Prideaux, is hereby completed ; it having been found practicable to introduce all the more important matter into three volumes. There is now, accordingly, in the hands of the public a Connection of Sacred and Profane History, from the Creation of the World down to the era of the Christian Redemption : in which are set forth not only the most remarkable events which befell the ancient people of God, but also an account of the origin, constitution, learning, commerce, and polity of all the distinguished nations of antiquity.

LEITH, *December* 1836.

BOOK III.

**COMPREHENDING THE GENERAL HISTORY OF THE
HEBREWS, THEIR ECCLESIASTICAL CONSTITUTION,
FORMS OF RELIGION, LITERATURE, ARTS, AND
COMMERCE, TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF
THE CONTEMPORANEOUS NATIONS WITH WHOM
THEY HAD ANY INTERCOURSE, FROM THE ACCES-
SION OF SAUL 1099, B. C., TO THE REIGN OF AHAZ
747, B. C.**

CHAPTER I.

CONTAINING AN OUTLINE OF THE HEBREW ANNALS,
FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE REGAL GO-
VERNMENT UNDER SAUL TO THE DIVISION OF
THE KINGDOM AT THE DEATH OF SOLOMON.

THE regal government of the Hebrews, it is well known, began in the person of Saul, whose history displays, in various points of view, much of the strength and nearly all the weakness of the human mind. He was selected by Samuel to occupy the throne in compliance with the wishes of the people, who, besides finding much to condemn in the conduct of the prophet's own sons, to whom he had confided a large portion of his authority, were now desirous of having at their head a military chief, qualified to lead them against the enemies of their country. They had experienced, both in the days of Eli and of his successor, the inconvenience of being governed by an individual whose duties were limited to a spiritual calling ; because, though he might discharge with ability all the civil offices which belonged to the ruler of the commonwealth, his professional pursuits obviously unfitted him for the discipline of a camp and the fatigues of the field.

Another reason for this change in the constitution of the Israelites arose from a circumstance which could no longer be concealed. The weakness and jealousy which are in some degree inseparable from a government comprehending a number of independent states, had already made themselves felt on the most important occasions. Established in different parts of the country, the several tribes were actuated by local interests and selfish views. Those in the north, for example, being exempted by their position from the hostile inroads of the Philistines and the Ammonites, refused to aid their brethren, the children of Simeon and Judah, whose territory was constantly exposed to the ravages of these warlike neighbours. In the struggle against Jabin, king of Canaan, only a small portion of the Hebrews took the field; and Barak, accordingly, in his song of triumph had to bewail the absence of many warriors who ought to have lent their aid at a moment so hazardous to the national welfare. In fact, during the sway of the more recent Judges, the federal union on which the republic was founded appeared practically dissolved. Nay, a bitter feeling of rivalry and dissension occasionally manifested itself among the kindred communities of which it was composed: Ephraim, stimulated by envy, vexed Judah, and Judah vexed Ephraim.

Meanwhile, several powerful kingdoms in the east as well as south threatened the independence of the twelve tribes, especially such of them as dwelt on the borders of the desert. Assyria had already turned her eyes towards the fertile lands which skirt the shores of the Mediterranean; and Egypt, anxious to protect her rich valley from the aggressions of that rising monarchy, began to perceive the numerous advantages which might accrue to her from obtaining possession of the frontier-towns of Palestine. In short, it was rapidly becoming manifest that the existence of the Hebrews as a free and separate people could only be maintained by

reviving the spirit and principles which had originally animated their confederation, and that too under a form better suited to the exigency with which they were pressed, and fitted on all occasions to combine their whole physical strength and patriotism in the support of a common cause. The people, therefore, demanded the consent of Samuel to a change in the structure of their government, so that they might have a king not only to preside over their civil affairs, but also to go out before them, and fight their battles.

The principal reason assigned by the elders of Israel for the innovation which they required at the hands of their venerable prophet, was that they might be "like the nations;" evidently alluding to the advantages of monarchical rule when decisive measures become necessary for the defence of a state. It is remarkable that Moses had anticipated this crisis, incident to the progress of society, and had even given rules for the administration of regal government. This wise legislator provided that the king of the Hebrews should not be a foreigner, lest he might be tempted to sacrifice the interests of his subjects to the policy of his native land, and even to countenance the introduction of unauthorized rites into the worship of Jehovah. It was also stipulated that the sovereign of the chosen people should not encourage the breeding of horses, lest he should be carried by his ambition to make war in distant countries, and thereby to neglect the welfare of the sacred inheritance promised to the fathers of the Jewish nation.

The qualities which recommended the son of Kish to the choice of Samuel and the approbation of the tribes, leave no room for doubt that it was chiefly as a military leader that he was raised to the throne. Nor was their expectation disappointed in the young Benjaminite, so far as courage and zeal were required for conducting the affairs of war. His lineage, indeed, was not calculated to gratify the pride

of the ancient people over whom he was called to rule ; for, as he himself acknowledged, when his high destiny was announced to him by the man of God, neither his family nor inheritance possessed any distinction in the public eye. In the beginning of his reign, accordingly, he was submissive to his spiritual guide, and followed implicitly all his directions, as well in the distribution of power as in the discharge of the peculiar duties incumbent upon him as the head of the nation ; nor was it until success in arms had confirmed his throne in the affections of the people that he became impatient of a control by which his inclinations were frequently restrained and his ambition somewhat rudely checked. His victory over the Ammonites excited in him the first emotions of pride and personal consequence ; and hence he who reads with attention the First Book of Samuel will observe that the young king no longer showed the full extent of his wonted deference to the holy seer.*

The interval which elapsed between Saul's nomination to the sovereignty of Israel and his accession to its actual power, is nowhere clearly defined in the sacred writings. When employed in the search for his father's asses, he appears before the reader as a goodly young man ; and yet, after he has reigned only one year, his son Jonathan is described as having attained such a degree of maturity as to be able to discharge the office of a commander in the first war with the Philistines. It is therefore not improbable that the period spent by the monarch-elect among the prophets, the masters of all the science and refinement which graced the higher classes in those days, was longer than might be inferred from a hasty perusal of the inspired narrative. The same remark may perhaps be extended to David, who at an early

age was selected to inherit the sceptre which was doomed to drop from the hand of Saul. His eminence in music and poetry, the chief accomplishments of his time, favour the supposition that he also enjoyed the aid of all the instruction which the schools of the Levites could bestow.

It cannot have escaped the observation of any reader, that in the historical parts of the Old Testament the authors of the several books are more solicitous to reveal facts in the full light of truth, than to set them forth in the precise order of their occurrence, or even in a strictly systematical connection. Causes and effects are occasionally brought into view together, though the one may have preceded the other by a considerable distance of time ; and as all intermediate events not having a direct influence on the main subject of the narrative are overlooked, the lapse of years is very apt to escape notice. Of this peculiarity in the biographical writings of the ancients, the lives of the patriarchs, as well as those of the earlier kings, afford a striking example. The incidents of youth are sometimes blended with such as fell out in maturer life ; minute dates are entirely disregarded ; and the details are suspended upon a chain which has less relation to chronological order than to the character and fortune of the individual whose actions are described. To this source of obscurity, as to the succession of events and the intervals by which they were separated, may be traced most of the difficulties which seem to encumber the history of Saul and David before they assumed the reins of power.

Under the pacific government of Samuel the Philistines had acquired so great an ascendancy as to have deprived the Israelites of the last remains of freedom, by placing garrisons in their strongholds, and by prohibiting them from manufacturing arms. To repress the ravages which those merciless conquerors were accustomed to make on the fields and flocks of his people, Saul selected three thousand men from

the numerous host which had just relieved Jabesh-Gilead, a third part of whom he placed under the command of his son Jonathan. This youth, not less distinguished by his courage than his generosity, surprised the fortress of Geba, and pursuing his advantage, inflicted a severe loss on the enemy. The Philistines, incensed at a defeat so shameful, collected a large force, consisting principally of chariots and horsemen, while the Hebrews, by their fears, confessed that they were unequal to the disciplined troops thus brought against them. Their king, accordingly, who possessed no higher power than belonged to the general of a republic, soon found himself deserted by the irregular bands whom the recent emergency had withdrawn from the labours of their farms: some hid themselves in caves, and others went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.*

It was on this occasion, when his soldiers were scattered from him, or “followed him trembling,” that the monarch, by putting forth his hand to the sacred functions of the priesthood, provoked the resentment of the prophet, and drew from his mouth the fatal assurance that the sovereignty of Israel was not to continue in his house. But the aspect of affairs was soon materially improved by the valour of Jonathan, who, impatient of the inactivity to which circumstances had condemned him, resolved to carry an alarm into the camp of the Philistines, now stationed at the entrance of the pass leading into the valley of Michmash. Attended only by his armour-bearer, he made his way among the rocks till he reached an outpost of the invaders, when falling upon them at unawares, he slew about twenty of their number, and thereby gave rise to such trepidation in their main body that, imagining the whole army of the Hebrews to be following the footsteps of their prince, they had instant

* 1 Samuel xiii. 3—7.

recourse to a precipitate flight. The success of this stratagem was no sooner perceived from the opposite heights of Gibeah, than Saul commenced the pursuit with his wonted impetuosity ; and so eager was he to avenge the cause of Israel upon their enemies, that he pronounced a curse against every man who, before the fall of night, should stop to satisfy his hunger. The escape of Jonathan from the effects of this unseasonable imprecation was due to the affection of the people, who would not permit the life of their deliverer to be sacrificed to the obligations of a foolish oath. “ As the Lord liveth,” they exclaimed, “ there shall not a hair of his head fall to the ground, for he hath wrought with God this day.”

During the flight of the Philistines an incident occurred which tends to throw light on the motives that induced the divine lawgiver of the Jews to prohibit the use of blood, and even to subject to certain restrictions the slaughter of animals for domestic use. After remarking that his countrymen continued the pursuit from Michmash to Aijalon, the sacred historian remarks that, as they had become very faint, “ they flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground : and the people did eat them with the blood. Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed : roll a great stone unto me this day. And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say to them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat ; and sin not against the Lord in eating with the blood.”*

The practice of the Abyssinians, whose manners, though nominally subject to the Christian law, still retain a deep tincture of ancient barbarism as well as of Jewish custom,

leaves no room for doubt as to the fact that some of the Eastern tribes have at all times had a strong desire for the warm blood of animals, and shown no reluctance to eat the flesh raw without draining from it that mysterious fluid which, in the Levitical institute, is always identified with the life. The humane spirit of the Mosaical economy, therefore, laboured to discountenance the manifold cruelties to which such a propensity inevitably leads, and of which recent examples may be adduced from the usages still prevalent among the native tribes of Ethiopia.*

The victory just mentioned, though gained at the expense of very little bloodshed, was nevertheless attended with the happiest results. The reputation of Saul as a brave and skilful warrior being established among the surrounding nations, his arms henceforth were less resolutely opposed; and, in point of fact, from this period his enterprises, generally speaking, were crowned with an easy triumph, even when directed against the most warlike of his enemies. He attacked with complete success the children of Moab and of Ammon, the Edomites, the princes of Zobah, and the still more formidable lords of the Philistines.

The hostile demeanour of the sons of Amalek to the Hebrew tribes while on their journey from Egypt to the promised land, had not been forgotten by that just Providence which watches over the weak and defenceless; and accordingly, in compliance with the principle that a condign punishment shall in all cases be inflicted upon the descendants of the oppressor, the command of Heaven was conveyed to the king through the ministry of Samuel, enjoining him to extirpate a people whose ancient crimes were already more

* Bruce's Travels, vol. iv. p. 482. This author describes in glowing language the savage luxury and horrid cruelties which attend the violation of the Mosaical Law in Abyssinia.

than equalled by their increasing corruption. The prosperous issue of the campaign against Agag was such as might have been expected in a cause which enjoyed the approbation of Jehovah ; but, yielding to the suggestions of avarice, or to the claims of a compassion which, in his circumstances, could not be justified, Saul so far indulged the wishes of his followers as to spare the life of the captive monarch, and to reserve for their use the more valuable portion of the spoil. By conduct at once so undutiful and presumptuous, he roused the indignation of the venerable prophet ; who, while he denounced his stubbornness as not less heinous than idolatry, plainly informed him that, in the Divine counsels, his successor was already chosen.

At this stage of his history may be perceived strong symptoms of that constitutional malady which darkened and embittered the remaining years of the unfortunate Saul. The introduction of David into the palace as a minstrel,—the designation of this youth to the throne,—his combat with the vaunting Goliath,—and his romantic friendship with Jonathan, constitute a pleasing episode, and afford, at the same time, a picture of ancient manners, where simplicity of description vies in interest with the great importance of the objects to which they form an accompaniment. The exploits and popularity of the shepherd-warrior excited the jealousy of his royal patron, who, although he raised him to various honours, and even accepted him as his son-in-law, ceased not to devise schemes against his life. His pride was wounded when he learned that the maidens of Israel, in their songs of triumph, raised the conqueror of the giant above their sovereign, giving to the former a tenfold merit as the destroyer of their enemies and the champion of their country. “ And Saul eyed David from that day forward.”*

* 1 Samuel xviii. 6—9.

During the incidents to which this state of things gave rise, the hatred and suspicion of the king are beautifully relieved in the narrative, by the many tokens of love, confidence, and esteem displayed by Jonathan in favour of the Bethlehemite, though he knew that this friend was destined to occupy the throne which, by right of birth, he might have considered as his own inheritance. Nor did David fail to repay to the father the generous feeling which he owed to the son. At the cave of Engedi, and in the wilderness of Ziph, where Saul's life was in his hand, he refrained from striking the blow to which a just resentment and the counsel of his confederates urged him ; and in both cases he took pleasure in allowing his respect for the sacred unction on his sovereign's head to prevail over the selfish motive so earnestly pressed upon him by the sharers of his exile. "Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand this day ; now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear, even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not ; for who can stretch his hand against the Lord's anointed and be blameless ?"

The malign spirit to which Saul's temper had become a victim, disturbed so far the repose of his household, and endangered their lives, that several of them found it necessary to seek for safety at a distance from the royal mansion. David, who had been protected from assassination by the ingenuity of his wife, fled to Naioth, in Ramah, where Samuel still presided over the school of the prophets, and there resumed the peaceful studies to which, it is not improbable, some of his earlier years had been devoted. The enraged monarch, upon learning that he had taken refuge at the abode of the prophet, sent messengers to seize him ; but these, so far from executing the vindictive orders with which they were charged, yielded to the solemn impressions of religious awe,

and joined the holy man in their songs of praise. Having twice repeated the errand with no better success, he went in person to demand the fugitive, whose pretensions occasioned to him so much uneasiness. No sooner, however, did he reach the tranquil scene, where the good spirit of piety and wisdom first touched his heart, than the angry emotions which he brought from home were subdued within him ; he lifted up his voice among the worshippers of Jehovah, took a share in the sacred music with which the hymns were accompanied ; and, stripping off his kingly robes, humbled himself before the man of God, whose confidence he in vain sought to recover.*

Unable to appease the wrath or remove the suspicion of his father-in-law, David adopted the resolution of seeking an asylum with Achish, the king of Gath. On his way thither he made a pause at Nob, a Levitical city in the tribe of Benjamin, where, pretending he was employed on a mission by his royal master, he induced the priest to bestow on him a portion of the shew-bread, and the sword of Goliath which had been deposited in the consecrated edifice. No armour, it might seem, could on this occasion be more unsuitable than the weapon of the champion whom he had slain in the valley of Elah, even if he had intended to serve as an ally of the Philistines, into whose territory he was retreating. His fame had already reached the ears of the Gathites, who were therefore very little disposed to give him a kind reception. Is not this David, they exclaimed, of whom the Hebrew

* 1 Samuel xix. 20—24. Among the ancients the term naked was applied to those who, for any purpose, had thrown off the upper garment, “*re-jecta veste superiore* ;” and hence commentators are agreed that when Saul is said to “ have lain down naked all that day and all that night,” nothing more is meant than that he laid aside his pallium, or cloak, and retained only the tunic. Josephus, in the 6th book of his Jewish Antiquities, chapter 14, says, that he rolled himself in his garment, and lay on the earth all that day and all that night. *Τὴν ἱσθῆτα περιδυσας ἄνῳ κατὰ πτερον ἐκίθη δι’ ὅλης τῆς ἡμέρας τε καὶ νυκτός.*

maidens sang in their dances? To shun the hazard to which he had thus exposed himself, he assumed the aspect and manners of a changeling; and having, by this expedient, disarmed the jealousy of Achish, he found an opportunity to escape to the borders of the desert, where, at the head of several hundred men, he pursued for some time a course of life which, though inconsistent with the usages of a civilized age, was not held by his contemporaries as being either disgraceful in itself, or unworthy of the future king of Israel.

It is painful to peruse the record of the tremendous retribution which Saul inflicted upon the inhabitants of Nob, for the involuntary aid their priest lent to David when overtaken by want. In the latter years, indeed, of that ill-fated prince, the spirit of wisdom and moderation entirely departed from him; and to an increased burden of domestic unhappiness was added a load of public calamity. Samuel, whose advice had so often availed him in the hour of perplexity, was called to pay the debt of nature, amid the regrets and veneration of the people, who, while they celebrated his obsequies at Ramah, the place of his birth, omitted no testimony of affection for his worth and faithfulness. The Philistines, at the same time, renewed their wonted enmity to the Hebrews, and prepared to invade their territories with an overwhelming force. Deprived of the spiritual aid which used to direct his way and sustain his heart, the devoted king left his camp in the night, and repaired to a reputed sorceress, to inquire of her concerning his own fate, and the general issue of the battle in which he was about to engage. Her reply, given on the apparent authority of Samuel, whose shade she seemed to recall from the regions of the dead, indicated to him the fatal scene which soon afterwards took place on Mount Gilboa,—the loss of his own life, the fall of his sons, and the utter discomfiture of his host by the sword of the enemy. Stunned by this intelligence, and

exhausted by long fasting and anxiety, he fell prostrate on the earth; and it was not without difficulty that he was so far restored as to be able to take a little food before he left the dwelling of the necromancer.

But he could not avoid the hard destiny which the anger or justice of Heaven had prepared for him. The Philistines, who had pitched their tents near Shunem, attacked his position with so much vigour that the men of Israel fled before them, or were cut in pieces in the attempt to escape. Surrounded by his faithful servants, the king defended himself for some time with great bravery; but at length seeing his three sons dead at his feet, and having received several wounds in his own person, he resolved to secure a retreat from the still greater calamity of falling alive into the hands of his inveterate foe. He entreated his armour-bearer to thrust him through with his sword. The youth, overcome by his fears and a very natural reluctance, refused to obey him; upon which he sunk upon his own weapon, and thereby disappointed the malice of the enemy, whose insulting triumph he dreaded more than death.

The death of Saul was followed by an act of generous valour, which does honour to the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, in whose behalf he had fought his first battle against the Ammonites. Hearing that the mangled bodies of their king and his sons were exhibited on the walls of Bethshan, they proceeded thither under the shade of night, removed by stealth the miserable remains, and, after bestowing upon them the usual honours, buried the ashes under a tree, and fasted seven days.

There are certain particulars in the biography of this first of Hebrew monarchs, the elucidation of which belongs rather to the commentator than the historian. Of these none seems to possess a higher degree of importance than his interview with the witch at Endor, the details of which have

given rise to much difference of opinion among the expounders of Scripture. It may be sufficient to mention, that the more learned of these professional writers are unanimous in the belief that the ghost of the great prophet himself was not summoned from the resting-place of souls, but that either a demon was evoked by the incantations of the familiar spirit, or that the hearing of the king was deceived by means of ventriloquism,—an art in which the ancient wizards are known to have excelled. Assuredly there occurred nothing throughout the whole transaction which is not perfectly consistent with imposture: no vision met the eye of Saul, and the impression made on his excited and most susceptible mind was wholly derived from the description of the cunning female, who was not ignorant of the part which it behoved her to act. “What sawest thou?” he exclaimed, when she affected terror at her own success. And she said, “I saw gods ascending out of the earth.” And he said unto her, “What form is he of?” And she said, “An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle.”*

* The reader will find sundry dissertations on this subject in the volumes of Bishop Patrick, Le Clerc, Calmet, Stackhouse, Law, Dr Hales, and some more recent authors. The first of these writers has no doubt that it was an evil spirit who personated Samuel and spoke in his name. “For it is not in the power of witches to disturb the rest of good men and to bring them up into this world when they please. And Samuel, we may be sure, would never have acknowledged such a power in magical arts; the credit of which the devil endeavoured to support.”—Vol. ii. p. 268.

It is not, indeed, in any degree probable that the Almighty, who had refused to answer Saul by dreams, by urim, or by prophets, would condescend to gratify his insane curiosity by sending Samuel from the dead to reveal an event which was to be realized in the course of a few hours. Dr Hales, however, holds the opinion, that “Samuel himself, or his spirit, was actually raised, immediately, and before the witch had time to utter any incantations, by the power of God, in a glorified form, and wearing the appearance of the ominous mantle in which was the *rent* that signified the rending of the kingdom from Saul’s family.”—*Analysis of Chronology*, vol. ii. p. 323.

It is manifest that, in our version of the Scriptures, there is, in the language used by Saul and the Pythoness, a slight discrepancy, which might be removed by giving to the term *אליהם*, a meaning not unusual in other

It is a fact too interesting to be passed without notice, that, though the immortality of the soul is not taught in the books of Moses, nor in any way connected with the doctrine of future reward and punishment, the separate existence of the spiritual part of man, after death, is distinctly admitted even as an article of popular belief. When, for example, Jacob expressed his resolution to go down mourning to the regions of Sheol, whither he imagined the spirit of his son Joseph had fled, he gave an affecting utterance to a firm persuasion held by the people of his age, that the intellectual principle in the human being does not perish with the body, but that it survives in a state of consciousness, capable of maintaining an intercourse with other spirits, and even of renewing the affections which it had cherished upon earth. Besides, there are several statutes in the Levitical law prohibiting the practice of all those arts whereby the ignorant and superstitious endeavoured to obtain from the dead a knowledge of future events. The punishments denounced by the inspired lawgiver against those who had the spirit of Ob, and such as should consult charmers, wizards, or necromancers, were authorized by the prevailing opinion that a communication might be established between the living and the inhabitants of the invisible world. The persons who followed this unlawful occupation are not unfrequently described as ventriloquists, or as having the power of producing vocal sounds not articulated by the organs of speech ; and hence the prophet Isaiah, when predicting the overthrow of Jerusalem, addresses it in these terms : “Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit out of

parts of Scripture. “And the woman said unto Saul, I see *gods* ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of?” It ought to have been rendered, I see a *ruler*, or *mighty one*, ascending out of the earth ; and then the question would be natural, “What form is *he* of ?”

the dust." In another place he derides those that seek unto wizards, who "peep and mutter," and who have recourse to the dead to inquire concerning the living.*

In all these cases the great fact of the immortality of the human soul is implied, while the power of certain incantations to recall the shades of the departed from their mysterious abode is also distinctly admitted. It is therefore manifest that on this interesting subject the Hebrews held tenets very closely resembling those which are to be found in the writings of pagan authors; and the only circumstance peculiar to the moral system of the ancient Israelites is the remarkable one on which Warburton has founded his hypothesis of the Divine Legation of Moses, namely, that this renowned lawgiver, though he could not be ignorant as to a future state of reward and punishment, has confined the sanction of all his statutes to temporal hopes and fears.†

The Romans, Greeks, and most of the nations in the remoter East, not only believed in the separate existence of human spirits after their escape from the body; they also placed great reliance on necromancy as the means of acquiring an insight into the order of coming events; and, moreover, connected with their faith in the imperishable nature

* See Levit. xx. 31; xix. 6. Deut. xviii. 10, 11. Isaiah xxix. 4; viii. 19. Josephus, speaking of Saul, says, ζητησῆναι δὲ αὐτῷ κίλεισι γυναίων τῶν ἰγγαστρίμυθων καὶ τὰς τῶν τιθνηκότων ψυχὰς ἱκαλούμενων; adding, that the race of ventriloquists, by evoking the souls of the dead, can predict future events to those who are desirous to know them.—*Ant. Jud. Lib. vi. c. 15.*

† Horace, in the eighth Satire of his First Book, details the process by which the souls of the dead were subjected to the power of incantations.

Vidi egomet nigrâ succinctam vadere pallâ
Canidiam pedibus nudis, passoque capillo,
Cum Sagana majore ululanti. Pallor utrasque
Fecerat horrendas aspectu. Scalpere terram
Unguibus, et pullam divellere mordicis agnam
Cæperunt. Cruor in fossam confusus, ut inde
Manes elicerent, animas responsa daturas.

See also Lucan's Pharsalia, Book vi., where an incantation is described in very strong language.

of man the important doctrine of responsibility for his words and actions, so soon as he should have terminated his brief course upon earth. It is therefore not a little singular that the inspired author of the Pentateuch, while he indicates in various ways his knowledge of the opinions and usages now mentioned, does not anywhere clearly reveal, as divine truths, the immortality of the soul and a future judgment.*

At the news of the defeat sustained on Mount Gilboa, terror spread among all the tribes of Israel. Those who dwelt in the valley beyond Jordan were no sooner informed of it than they retired into their mountain-strongholds, leaving the cities which they had in the plain to be occupied by the Philistines. David was still at Ziklag, a town bestowed upon him by Achish, the prince of Gath, to whom he had been obliged to flee a second time for protection when his life was threatened by Saul; and thither a young Amalekite repaired, as soon as the victory was decided, carrying with him to the Hebrew exile the diadem and bracelet of the fallen monarch. "And David said, How went the matter? I pray thee tell me." The fugitive related that he belonged to the army of the Israelites; that he had witnessed their total overthrow, after a sanguinary conflict; and that Saul and his son Jonathan were dead. Being farther questioned as to his precise knowledge of these facts, he confessed that when passing over the field of battle he saw the king leaning on his spear, who, perceiving the chariots and horsemen of the enemy to be pressing hard upon his people, entreated him to put an end to his sufferings, which, owing to his wound not

* Quod cum ita sit, mirum est hanc sententiam de immortalitate animorum in Veteri Testamento nusquam aperte tradi, cum tanti esset momenti, ut nulla majoris esset, ad salutem et Religionis et Reipublicæ ponderis. Fateor me hæc assequi non posse, quamvis alios meliora docentes, et firmis rationibus comprobantes audire paratus sim.—*Le Clerc*, vol. ii. p. 269.

proving mortal, had become excruciating. To this urgent request he yielded, acknowledging that he stood upon him and slew him, "because I was sure he could not live after that he was fallen." "How!" cried the other, "wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand against the Lord's anointed?" And without admitting any farther explanation, he ordered him to be put to death.

The lamentation of the Psalmist over his friend Jonathar and the unfortunate king deserves praise not less for the beauty of its composition than for the tone of generous affection with which it is animated. His allusion to the songs of triumph which the daughters of the Philistines would raise within the walls of Gath and in the streets of Askelon, compared with the envious rage excited in the breast of Saul by the choral hymns and dances of the Hebrew maidens when David slew Goliath, affords a lively idea of the influence which females possess even in the simplest conditions of society. When the warriors of the tribe are successful, the young women go forth to meet their victorious kinsmen, and with timbrels, chants, and joyful acclamations, extol their deeds of valour: And when adversity has befallen them, when the mighty have sunk and the weapons of war are perished, the virgins lift up their voices in sorrow, and bewail their loss in the most plaintive strains. Nor were such usages confined to the smaller nations which at that period occupied the borders of Western Asia. The literature of Greece and Rome presents many tokens of a similar feeling; the respect of the rudest hordes for the approbation of the female heart, and the fierce jealousy with which it was sometimes accompanied even in the tents of heroes and kings.

But while David mourned the defeat of his countrymen, he did not neglect to point out the reason of their inferiority to the Philistines. These last, it should seem, had become

very expert in the use of the bow; and as the weapons of the Israelites were confined to sword and spear, the army of Saul was destroyed by showers of arrows. It is, accordingly, remarked by the sacred annalist, that “the battle went sore against him, and the archers hit him, and he was sore wounded of the archers.” The improvements made by the enemy in the art of war could not be unknown to David, as he had resided some time in one of their cities, and even joined their camp with the view of taking a share in their expedition. While, therefore, he deplored the loss which had befallen his tribe, and the hard fate of his father-in-law, the king, he expressed his resolution to introduce the bow among the children of Judah.*

Though the nomination of this celebrated leader to the throne of the Hebrews rested on Divine authority, he nevertheless found himself opposed by two rivals, Ishbosheth, the only surviving son of Saul, and Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. Abner, the captain of the host, espousing the cause of the former, presented him to the army, by whom he was readily acknowledged as their lawful sovereign. But the son of Jesse was likewise supported by a numerous party, among whom were his three nephews, the renowned Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, remarkable, like Achilles, for his swiftness of foot. The tribe of Judah, besides, already the most powerful of the confederation, were desirous to raise him to the chief authority; and inviting him to Hebron, whither the voice of heaven had directed him to repair, the heads of families received him as their anointed prince, and bound themselves to him by the usual forms of allegiance.

* 2 Samuel i. 18. This notice is made in the form of a parenthesis. “(Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher:)” David vero lamentationem hanc, super Saule et ejus filio Jonathane, composuit, dixitque *cam se composuisse* ut Judæ posteri arcu uti edocerentur. — *Clement Comment.* vol. ii. p. 280.

The war between the house of David and that of Saul commenced in a singular incident, which, though fatal to both parties, appears to have too much of form in the method of its procedure to allow the supposition that it was altogether unpremeditated. It was not unusual for the champions of hostile armies to defy one another to a personal combat, on the issue of which was sometimes made to depend the determination of the controversy that had called them into the field. But, on this occasion, twelve individuals from each host engaged in a mortal strife, while the leaders took their seats on opposite sides of a pool to witness the assault, and mark its result. The event was so ambiguous as not to afford any indication of the will of Providence as to the great object of this national contest; for all the combatants were slain, every one by his single antagonist, or, to use the language of the original record, they "caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side, so they fell down together."

A general action ensued, in which the adherents of Ishbosheth were defeated with great slaughter. Abner fled, and being closely pursued by Asahel, was compelled, in self-defence, to run the brother of Joab through with his spear; a circumstance which laid the foundation of a bitter enmity between the two commanders. Recruiting his forces, the zealous Abner did not cease to support the cause of his master's son during more than two years; but being at length disgusted by certain suspicions on the part of the young king, he made his peace with David, and forthwith added the weight of his name to the rising interests of the tribe of Judah. Joab, who perhaps dreaded the effects of his ascendancy in the royal counsels, and who had not forgotten that the blood of Asahel was yet unavenged, seized the first opportunity to take away his life. The son of Saul, too, who appears to have been but little fitted for his high

station, was soon afterwards removed by assassination ; and in this manner a path was opened for the king of Judah, in which he found an easy access to the sovereignty of the Twelve tribes. The claims of Mephibosheth, the lineal descendant of the first monarch, were overlooked ; he was too young for the burden of government, and more especially for the duties of a leader in the field ; and as the military reputation of David was already great, both among friends and foes, the elders of the Union, when they consented to his inauguration at Hebron, invited him to become captain over the whole people, assigning as their reason, that “ when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel.”

Seven years and six months had passed since the fight on Mount Gilboa ; and hence, as David was thirty when he received the sceptre of Israel and Judah, he must have been only about twenty-two when he was called by his brethren to the exercise of supreme power. During the reign of his predecessor, though the fame of the Hebrews as a warlike nation was darkened by many reverses, their numbers, and the extent of the territory over which they had acquired dominion, were considerably increased. On the south the tribe of Simeon had multiplied to such a degree, that their lands were no longer sufficient for the maintenance of the population ; and accordingly, to find pasture for their flocks, they extended their habitations eastward into the valley, where they came into collision with the descendants of Esau, whose possessions lay on the edge of the Arabian desert. On the other extremity the tribe of Dan sought a compensation for the losses inflicted upon them by the Philistines ; and having built a city at the foot of Mount Libanus, they conducted thither a prosperous colony, which, during the earlier times of the monarchy, contributed much to their strength and resources. The Reubenites on the left bank

of the Jordan had pushed their nomadic stations far into the Syrian wilderness, the ancient abode of the children of Ishmael. Gad, too, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, not satisfied with the portion assigned to them of the pastoral country of Gilead, turned their faces towards the north-east, and at length, in defiance of the natives, pitched their tents at the base of Hermon, whence their posterity could maintain a frequent intercourse with Damascus. Naphtali was not less successful in making additions to his territory on the northern border; while Asher, in a more western direction, gradually encroached on the rich fields claimed as an inheritance by the maritime community of Sidon. Meanwhile all the tribes of the interior, Judah and Benjamin perhaps excepted, had experienced a similar augmentation in their wealth and numbers; whence arose the fact, mentioned by the compiler of the Chronicles, that David, immediately upon his accession, found himself at the head of 400,000 armed men, eager to extirpate all the enemies of the Israelitish race.*

The first exploit of this prince after his second coronation was performed against the Jebusites, who still continued to occupy Jerusalem, the fortifications of which they appear to have recently improved with great care. So confident, indeed, were they, more especially in the defences of Mount Sion, that, when summoned to surrender, they boasted, their lame and blind were sufficient to repel the most vigorous attack the Israelites could make upon it. But the skill and determination of David, seconded by the furious valour of Joab, soon convinced them that their trust was reposed on an insecure foundation; for, being incensed at their taunting message, he stimulated his followers by example and reward not to slacken their exertions till the fortress were reduced. Salem, accordingly, so venerable for its

* 1 Chronicles xii. 23—37.

early history and associations, was soon in the hands of the Hebrew monarch, who resolved to make it the capital of his kingdom and the seat of his government. He added to the buildings of the citadel, which he also decorated in a manner suitable to the purpose he now contemplated; and having enclosed the whole with walls, so as to separate it from the lower town, he bestowed upon this section of his new metropolis the distinction of his own name.*

Amidst these cares for the embellishment of the royal residence, the pious sovereign called to remembrance that the ark of the covenant was not yet provided with an edifice corresponding to its dignity, whether viewed as the symbol of national greatness, or as the pledge of Divine protection. It was therefore resolved to remove it from Kirjath-Jearim, —where it had probably remained since it was returned by the Philistines,—to Jerusalem, henceforth the asylum of the public faith, and the scene in which its most splendid rites were to be displayed. At the head of 30,000 men, supplied with all the aids of music and poetry, David commenced the sacred procession, singing the triumphal hymn, “ Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered !” The holy relic, which carried with it fear as well as joy, and diffused around it the horrors of death not less vividly than the blessings of life and prosperity, was, after some delay, placed in the tabernacle or pavilion prepared for it on Mount Sion, and the whole ceremony was concluded by an

* 2 Samuel v. 6—9. 1 Chronicles xi. 4—8. The opinions of commentators with regard to the “ blind and lame ” of the Jebusites, are, as usual in all cases of doubt, more various than satisfactory. The learned John Gregorie, of Christ Church, thinks that the “ blind and lame ” were the idols or tutelary gods of the city of Jebus. “ I say then,” are his words, “ of the Claudi and the Cæci, that they were no other than those, τὰ πάλαι ἄδωμινα στοιχιωδὴ τῆς πόλεως φυλακτικαῖα, statuary Telesmes, so much celebrated of old, which, unless they kept the city, the watchmen but laboured in vain.”—*Notes and Observations upon some Passages of Scripture. Works*, p. 33.

expression of religious gratitude to Jehovah the God of their fathers.*

The brilliant success of the new reign attracted the notice of neighbouring states. Hiram, the king of Tyre, made haste to congratulate the successor of Saul, and to put into his hands the means of erecting a palace more magnificent, both in material and workmanship, than Jewish artificers could produce. The Philistines alone seemed alarmed by the vast accession of power to which David had attained, and, with the intention of checking his ambitious views towards the shores of the Mediterranean, they approached his border with a formidable host. A Hebrew prince could never be surprised at such an invasion, because the establishment of a great commonwealth so near their territories must have proved a natural cause of jealousy to the lords of Gath and Askelon. Several battles were fought, of which the issue was decidedly in favour of the Israelites, whose experience in war had now inspired them with a steady courage, of which their leaders knew well how to avail themselves under every change of circumstances. But, as the hostilities pursued by the house of David during a long series of years against the Moabites, Amalekites, Ammonites, Syrians, Phenicians, and Edomites, are described with some degree of minuteness in the second volume of this work, it is unnecessary to enter into details. Suffice it to mention, that the Euphrates soon became the eastern boundary of the Israelitish kingdom; the northern limits were secured by

* The music, dancing, and singing, characteristic of oriental worship in those remote days, were usually succeeded by an extensive sacrifice, which afforded the means of additional enjoyment to a large multitude. "And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of Hosts. And he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine. So all the people departed, every one to his house."—2 Samuel vi. 18, 19.

the occupation of numerous fortresses on the confines of Syria, and by the friendly dispositions of Tyre ; while the southern provinces were exempted from alarm by the subjection of the Philistines, and the conquest of the restless hordes of Idumea.

The success of the Hebrews under David verified the ancient prediction, that their dominions should extend from the river on the east to the great sea westward. Hada-dezer, the king of Zobah, was the first of the Syrian princes who felt the weight of their power, being defeated in a battle in which he lost twenty thousand men and several thousand horses. The particulars stated in the second Book of Samuel do not precisely accord with the details given in the first Book of the Chronicles ; but, from a comparison of the two narratives, it appears perfectly manifest that the Israelites gained an important victory, which confirmed their influence along the whole of the Eastern border, and even made them formidable to the court of Damascus. At this period, mention is made of some small states on both banks of the Euphrates, which were forced either to submit to the conquerors, or to solicit their protection ; but, as they were soon afterwards swallowed up by the rising power of Assyria, they have long ceased to possess any interest in the eye of the historian or antiquary.

David's quarrel with the Ammonites cannot be omitted, even in the most compendious view of his life, because it is closely connected with that memorable event which brought a deep stain upon his reputation, and led to much trouble in his household. Having been kindly received by the ruler of that people, when subjected to the miseries of exile, he thought it becoming the station he now occupied to congratulate Hanun, the son of his benefactor, upon his accession to the throne. The young king, misled by his counsellors, who regarded the Hebrew envoys as spies,

treated these last with great harshness, and dismissed them with every token of contempt. Such an affront necessarily led to war. Joab was accordingly instructed to march against the audacious prince who had at once defied the arms and insulted the crown of his master. Hanun, aware of the preparations made for invading his lands, had obtained the assistance of twenty thousand Syrians, belonging to Beth-rehob and Zobah, together with two smaller contingents, under chiefs whose names were Maachah and Ishtob. The Hebrew general resolved to prevent their junction; and with this view he divided his force, of which he himself led the main body against the auxiliaries, while the remainder under Abishai, his brother, kept the Ammonites in check. Complete success attended both movements, and the troops of Beth-rehob and Zobah were driven back to their own country, whither David himself pursued them to complete their overthrow.

To gratify more fully his resentment against the Ammonites, the victorious monarch sent an army to besiege Rabbah their capital. It has been already mentioned that this city, defended by the natural strength of its position, withstood the utmost efforts of his troops about two years; and that it was during this tedious blockade that he formed the unhappy intimacy with Bathsheba, the wife of one of his officers. The punishment, however, by which the crimes of the king were to be atoned, did not comprehend failure in his attack upon the children of Ammon. The measure of their guilt was full, and they were accordingly delivered into the hands of their enraged enemy, who in person conducted the final assault on their fortifications. Rabbah fell, and its inhabitants were condemned to the most frightful execution that military men in those uncivilized times ever inflicted upon vanquished adversaries. Hanun himself appears to have been numbered among the slain; for his crown, which is

said to have weighed, or rather to have been worth, a talent of gold, made a part of the spoils which the victors carried to Jerusalem.

The threatening conveyed by the prophet, who was sent by the Almighty to admonish David, pointed to evils which were to arise in his own house, or, in other words, to sufferings that were to be inflicted upon him, by the intemperance and ambition of his own children. The violent passions displayed by his eldest son Amnon, and the rebellion of Absalom, the object of his tenderest affections, taught the penitent Psalmist that the laws of heaven cannot be violated with impunity.

In the second Book of Samuel, it is said that the insurrection now alluded to was matured after the lapse of forty years. “And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed unto the Lord in Hebron; for thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will praise the Lord.” A difficulty has arisen as to the date at which these forty years commence. Some compute them from the time that the Israelites demanded a king from Samuel; others, from the time that David was anointed; and others, again, from the time that he took possession of the united tribes after the fall of Ishbosheth. Archbishop Usher favours the opinion, that the commencement of the forty years ought to be traced back to the first unction by the prophet, that namely, which took place in the house of Jesse; concluding, that the king was sixty years old when this rebellion broke out, and that he lived ten years after it. A late writer assumes that the event from which the term in question ought to be calculated is the victory gained by the stripling-warrior over Goliath; and that Absalom sought permission to celebrate the memory of this exploit by hold-

ing a solemn festival at Hebron. But all these hypotheses are encumbered with objections not to be removed by the ordinary rules of interpretation; while in the narratives of Josephus and Theodoret, as well as in the Syriac and Arabic versions of the Old Testament, the number of years is reduced to four. It was, says the former of the two writers just named, four years after his father was reconciled to him that Absalom entered into a conspiracy, with the intention of usurping the supreme power.* 16, 247

The retreat of the sorrowful king from Jerusalem, and the entrance of his undutiful son at the head of the rebellious faction, are described in the sacred volume with an affecting simplicity, much more suitable to the subject than the embellishments of an artificial style. But as the fortune of the contending parties in the field as well as in counsel is familiar to every one, it becomes unnecessary to describe the attachment of Hushai, the malignant spirit of Ahithophel, the disinterestedness of Ittai, the resolute faithfulness of Joab, the melancholy fate of Absalom, and the eloquent grief of David. The return of the monarch to his capital was attended with circumstances which proved the warmth of his gratitude and the goodness of his feelings. The fears inseparable from a civil commotion throw doubt sometimes on the intentions of the most loyal, and expose to suspicion all who are supposed capable of deriving any benefit from the meditated change. Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, had been denounced to the king as a partisan of the rebels, and

* *Μίᾱ δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς καταλαγὴν τισσάρων ἰστων ἢ διὰ παραλιλυθίων.*—*Anl. Jud.* lib. vii. c. 8. The author of the "Histoire des Hebreux" writes as follows; but as he refers not to any work as a prop to his opinions, the reader is left in doubt as to the extent of their claim upon his belief. "Il y avoit alors quarante ans que David avoit été vainqueur de Goliath, Absalom lui demanda la permission d'aller célébrer la mémoire de cet événement à Hebron, par une fête solennelle."—Tome i. p. 347.

was on that account deprived of the inheritance secured to him at the accession of his father's friend: but the latter, lending a ready ear to the apology urged by the accused prince, restored a large portion of his estate, accompanied with a renewal of his confidence.

It cannot have escaped the attentive reader, that, amid the joy which gladdened the countenances of the people upon the restoration of their sovereign, there were distinct manifestations of the jealousy formerly displayed by the other tribes against Judah, and to which may be attributed their final separation under Rehoboam. An interview was held by the leaders on both sides, during which they gave vent to the angry passions that swelled in their bosoms; but it is remarked by the inspired chronicler, that "the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel." Another appeal was therefore made to arms. Sheba, a son of one of the families of Benjamin, stood forth as the champion of this second rebellion, and soon found himself supported by most of the discontented tribes. Amasa, who commanded the insurgents under Absalom, had been pardoned and received into royal favour; an act of clemency which the faithful Joab, as he did not approve half-measures when the peace of the country was threatened, speedily rendered unavailing by depriving him of life. It farther appears, indeed, that he had gained so far upon the esteem of David as to be intrusted with the conduct of the campaign against Sheba; and it was not till his dilatory proceedings excited suspicion as to the fidelity of his intentions, that the chief power was again confided to the son of Zeruiah. On this occasion, as in most others, the leader of the revolt fell the victim of treachery. Being besieged in the small town of Abel, which could not have long resisted the impetuous valour of Joab, his head was made the price of reconciliation. It was thrown over the wall to the relentless general; who, considering the contest now at an end,

“blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city every man to his tent.”*

There is reason to suspect that the party who had originally favoured the house of Saul were not yet extinct, and that the propensity to rise against the government of David, especially after he had ceased to lead his armies in person, was imagined to have some connection with their secret intrigues. This suspicion may seem to derive some countenance from the fact that the tribe of Benjamin, from whom the first Jewish monarch had sprung, were generally implicated in the plots of which the object was to undermine the authority of the reigning sovereign. To secure the tranquillity of the country, therefore, it seemed expedient to Divine Providence to permit the extermination of the whole of Saul's descendants. A sore famine distressed the land, and it was revealed by the oracle, that this token of wrath was occasioned by the fact that the blood of the Gibeonites, shed by the late king in defiance of a treaty, still continued unrevenged. Availing themselves of the right of retaliation which the laws of those times permitted, this savage people demanded that seven of his sons should be delivered into their hands. David, constrained by the love he bore to the memory of Jonathan, and from respect to the oath which had passed between them, saved Mephibosheth, but he resigned to the vindictive superstition of the Amorites the two sons of Rizpah whom she bore unto Saul, and the five sons of Merab, the eldest daughter of that monarch. This barbarous execution, however much it may have been calculated to restore prosperity to his land, and to confirm the hearts of his people, must have inflicted a severe wound upon the humane feelings of the pious Israelite, who has extolled in the loftiest strains of eastern poetry the glorious attributes of mercy, and the rare happiness of a forgiving spirit.†

* 2 Samuel xx. 22.

† 2 Samuel xxi. 1—10.

After some obscure combats with the Philistines, remarkable chiefly for certain feats of personal strength, the king allowed himself to be seduced into the great sin of numbering his subjects, throughout all their tribes, in the north as well as in the south. The most learned of Jewish antiquaries have failed in their attempts to define the transgression with which David was chargeable on this occasion, or to point out the law that he violated by instituting a national census. There is indeed a passage in the book of Exodus which seems to indicate the hazard attending such a process:—“When thou takest the number of the children of Israel, according to their number,” says the Divine Lawgiver to his servant Moses, “then shall every man give a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them.” Reasoning on the terms of this injunction, Josephus and other writers in more modern times have concluded that David had neglected to demand from every male of mature age the half-shekel of silver appointed by the law, and that therefore God had sent a pestilence among the people, as a suitable punishment for their ingratitude and disobedience. But this conjecture has not been deemed satisfactory by the best commentators on the Hebrew Scriptures, in whose eyes it appears much more probable that the sinfulness of the action arose from the motives which incited the king to perform it. The population of the holy land, not less than the extent of its territory, had increased in a great degree during the years that he had occupied the throne; and it is not unnatural to suppose that vanity, mingled with a strong feeling of ungodly triumph, suggested the expedient of exalting his reputation by comparing the actual state of his dominions with the humbled condition in which he found them at the death of Saul.*

* 2 Samuel xxiv.

With the return of peace the mind of this renowned prince opened as usual to the pious duty of building a temple for the worship of Jehovah, as well as for the reception of those sacred emblems of the divine guardianship so long cherished by the descendants of Jacob. For this purpose he devoted a large share of the booty which fell into his hands when sacking the towns of the Syrian kings who joined in the league formed against him by the Ammonites ; and the golden crowns and brazen shields found on the bodies of the enemy in the field of battle, or on the ramparts of cities, he accumulated as a fitting material for constructing the sacred furniture required by the priests in the solemn rites of their religion.

The necessity of naming his successor was hastened by the impatience of his eldest son Adonijah, who, trusting to the right of primogeniture, directed his ambition towards the throne which, in the course of nature, he knew would soon become vacant. His pretensions were seconded by Joab, whose counsel had hitherto decided many of the principal measures of government, and by Abiathar the high-priest, who had necessarily a great influence among the people. This intelligence was no sooner conveyed to David than he instructed Nathan the prophet, and Zadok, one of the heads of the priesthood, to put themselves under the protection of Benaiah, a faithful commander, and with a body of troops to proceed to Gihon and anoint Solomon king. Adonijah, meanwhile, was kept in ignorance of his father's intentions, and it was not till his rival returned to the capital amid the acclamations of the multitude, that his eyes were opened to the dangers with which he was surrounded. He was still engaged in the ceremonial of a feast to which he had invited his political friends, when, from the sudden change of affairs, he learned that he was already exposed to the penalties of treason and usurpation. Urged

by his fears he fled to the altar within the Tabernacle, where he found a temporary asylum ; but the peace of the kingdom appeared soon afterwards to require that he as well as Joab, the most fearless soldier in Israel, should be removed by death.

It is remarkable that David had anticipated the inconvenience and even the positive hazard which might disturb the reign of his youthful successor, should this son of Zeruiah, whose fierce temper he himself had been unable to control, be permitted to prosecute his ambitious schemes. He therefore recommended to Solomon to watch with the utmost vigilance the motions of his restless cousin, and upon the first symptom of disaffection to put an end to his life. The same counsel was given with regard to Shimei, who had cursed his sovereign when compelled to leave Jerusalem during Absalom's rebellion. Of these suspected chiefs the former had on his head the blood of two commanders, Abner and Amasa, whom the king had delighted to honour : and the latter was deeply stained with that most detestable of all baseness, an insolent triumph over a fallen master. Their execution, therefore, though inconsistent with the more lenient justice of modern times, does not violate any of our sympathies : the murderer is not pitied, nor is the fate of the calumniator bewailed by the feeling heart.

Having thus provided for the security of the succession, the maintenance of the law, and the permanent dignity of the national religion, David breathed his last, having reigned forty years over the flourishing and powerful monarchy of which he may be considered the founder. He succeeded to a kingdom distracted with civil dissension, environed on all sides by warlike enemies, without a capital, almost without an army, and without any fixed bond of union among the several tribes over whom he was called to rule. He

left a compact and united state, stretching from the frontier of Egypt to the foot of Lebanon, from the Euphrates to the sea. He had crushed the power of the Philistines, and subdued or curbed all the neighbouring kingdoms; he had formed an important alliance with the great city of Tyre; and he had organized an immense disposable force, for every month 24,000 soldiers appeared in arms to be trained as the standing militia of the country. He had, besides, a body-guard, the Cherethites and Pelethites, composed of foreigners, and amounting to about six hundred men. These mercenaries, it may be observed, were distinguished for their fidelity and attachment to his person under all changes of fortune. They marched with him from Jerusalem during the civil broils already mentioned; and when Adonijah attempted to seize the sceptre by force, they proceeded to Gihon, with Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet, to defend Solomon upon his accession to the royal dignity.*

It has been justly remarked, that the Hebrew nation owed the long peace of the son's reign to the bravery and wisdom of the father. If the rapidity with which a kingdom rises to unexampled prosperity, and the permanence, as far as human care can provide, of that prosperity, be an accurate criterion of the abilities of a sovereign, few rulers celebrated in history can compete with David. His personal character has been often discussed; but, both by his enemies and by some of his learned defenders, this task has been executed with very

* The Cherethites and Pelethites are understood to have been archers and slingers, troops whom David enlisted among the Philistines during his exile in their country, and immediately before he was called to occupy the throne of Judah. The defeat of Saul on Gilboa was owing in a great measure to his want of bowmen. The archers of the enemy hit him, and he was sore wounded of the archers; and it has been already observed, that David introduced into his eloquent lamentation over the king and his beloved friend Jonathan, an earnest entreaty that the Hebrews should be taught the use of missile weapons. The Greek form of Pelethites is *φελαιτι*, or *φελαιτι*; whence probably the Latin Velites, the light troops of the Roman legion.

little attention to his age and country. In forming their judgment respecting the chieftain of an eastern and comparatively barbarous people, they have agreed to proceed on the ground of modern opinion and Christian principle. If, in his exile, he became a captain of freebooters, he assumed, like the pirate in ancient Greece, a profession which was esteemed by no means dishonourable. If he employed craft or even falsehood in some of his enterprises, it ought to be remembered that a chivalrous or conscientious attachment to truth was not held as one of the cardinal virtues of his day. Like other eastern kings, too, he had his harem : and, like other warriors in Western Asia, he assembled his followers in secret, and revenged himself on his enemies with little regard to human suffering. His one great crime violated the immutable and universal laws of morality, and therefore admits of no excuse. On the other hand, his consummate personal bravery and military talent, his generosity to the worst of his foes, his fidelity to his friends, and his steadfast attention to the true interests of his country, and above all, his exalted piety and gratitude towards God, amply justify the fervent love of the Jewish people for the memory of their great monarch.*

The splendour of his reign, no doubt, was occasionally clouded by domestic guilt and treason ; and the nation, which could have defied the power of its bitterest enemies, was divided and rendered miserable by the foul passions that issued from the royal palace. Still, notwithstanding the rebellion

* Milman's *History of the Jews*, vol. i. p. 247. The character of David has been analyzed by Bayle, Morgan, and Delany ; the first in his " *Dictionary*," the second in his " *Moral Philosophy*," and the last, in his " *Historical Account of the Life and Reign of David, King of Israel*." But none of them makes the proper distinction between the private transactions and public conduct of this son of Jesse, who was a good king, though in many respects little entitled to praise viewed simply as an individual.

of Absalom and the defection of certain military leaders, David bequeathed to his successor a flourishing kingdom, rapidly advancing in the arts of civilized life, enjoying an advantageous commerce, the respect of neighbouring states, and a decided preponderance among the governments of Syria. His last years, as has been already remarked, were spent in making preparations for the building of a temple at Jerusalem; a work that he himself was not allowed to accomplish, because his hands were stained with blood, which, however justly shed, rendered them unfit for rearing an edifice to the God of mercy and peace.

Solomon, who was not ignorant that his brother Adonijah was supported by a strong party among the chiefs of the state, as also perhaps by a feeling of sympathy among the people at large, used vigorous measures for reducing the influence of the hostile faction, and for placing his friends in all the offices of trust. The duty of commander he assigned to Benaiah, whose personal attachment recommended him to this important charge; and at the same time he raised Zadok to the head of the officiating priests, having removed Abiathar, a descendant of Eli, for intermeddling too openly in political affairs. These precautions, which could not be deemed unnecessary, were rendered more efficacious by the high reputation to which the young king had attained for learning and wisdom. Nature had not formed him for the hardy pursuits of conquest, nor inflamed him with the love of that distinction which is derived from fearless courage and reckless enterprise. On the contrary, the original structure of his mind was fitted for reflection, science, and refinement, for the arts of peace and the elegancies of social life. In his reign, therefore, there was less reason to dread the intrigues of an ambitious general, or the turbulence of a factious army. The dangers which menaced Solomon were those to which he eventually fell a victim;

the luxury and effeminacy of an eastern court, when abounding in wealth and freed from the terror of powerful enemies.*

Though it was not till the fourth year of his reign that Solomon actually began the great work which constitutes the chief glory of his administration, the house of God in the metropolis of Judea, yet he did not long delay the suitable preparations. In the days of his father a regular intercourse was established between the Tyrians and the Hebrews, whose respective pursuits as merchants and agriculturists naturally laid the foundation of a beneficial commerce. Hiram, who had offered his services to David, renewed similar expressions of kindness to his son; and the latter, knowing well that his subjects were greatly inferior in all the processes connected with architecture to the ingenious artificers of the seacoast, readily accepted the aid which his predecessor had found it necessary to decline. He entreated that the king of Tyre would send some of his people to Lebanon to assist in cutting down such cedars as might be required; "for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians." These and other preliminary operations occupied more than a hundred thousand men, during a considerable period before the foundations of the temple were laid upon the holy hill.

Of the celebrated building now mentioned the descriptions communicated to us in the books of the Kings and Chronicles, as well as in the Antiquities of Josephus, are far from

* The sacred historian says of this popular monarch, that his "wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom."—1 Kings iv. 30—34.

being very exact, or even perfectly intelligible. The last of these authorities, having before his eyes the plans of the successive structures which covered the same site in the days of Solomon, of Ezra, and of Herod respectively, has in his delineation mixed together the principal features of all the three. The compiler of the Chronicles, too, appears to have had access to documents different from those on which the more ancient narrative is founded ; and therefore his account varies considerably, both in the dimensions of the several parts and in the estimate of the entire extent. Indeed, it cannot have escaped any attentive reader of the Old Testament, that, owing to the form in which arithmetical calculations were made and preserved in those days, little certainty can be obtained as to the minuter results ; and as, on some occasions, it was the manifest object of the writer to convey an impression of greatness rather than a precise view of particulars, there is no just ground for a charge of inaccuracy, even in cases where it is impossible to reconcile all the numerical statements. In fact, for the main purpose which the sacred writers had in view, round numbers were sufficient ; and their descriptions, as they were not meant to convey scientific information or professional details, ought not to be read with too critical an eye, nor condemned as defective merely because they are not expressed in the terms of an art the principles of which were not understood by the people for whom they wrote.

The spot selected for the worship of Israel was that part of the sacred hill denominated Moriah, or the Mount of Vision ; the place, it was believed, which Abraham had seen from afar, and where he was commanded to sacrifice his son. As the surface of the rock was unequal, great labour was required to level it for the foundation : the sides, which on the east and south were very steep, were faced with an immense wall, built from the bottom of the valley ; a work of

prodigious labour, as the huge stones of which it was composed were strongly mortised together, and indented into the solid mass of the precipice. Around the space thus prepared, which presented the appearance of an irregular quadrangle, there was raised a wall of considerable height; within this was a court, subsequently appropriated to such Gentiles as shewed an inclination to participate in the Hebrew rites; while an inner division, also duly separated by a fence, was allotted to the descendants of Jacob, whose birthright entitled them to approach more closely to the sacred shrine. The court of the priests, which was again within that of the Israelites, supplied the site for the temple itself; and as there was a regular ascent, by means of a stair, from each court to the one next it, the level consequently rose in every platform from the outer wall to the porch of the main edifice.*

The temple itself, it has been said, was rather a monument of the wealth than of the taste or architectural skill of the Jewish people. It was a wonder of the world, owing to the splendour of its materials, more than from the grace, boldness, or majesty of its height and dimensions. It had neither the colossal magnitude of the Egyptian, nor the simple dignity and proportional harmony of the Grecian, nor perhaps the fantastic grace and lightness of oriental structures in modern times. "On the whole, the Temple was an enlargement of the tabernacle, built of more costly and durable materials. Like its model, it retained the ground-

* "To make this building more firm and secure, it was found necessary to begin the foundation at the bottom of the mount; so that the sides were three hundred and thirty-three cubits or about six hundred and eight feet high, before they were raised to the level of the temple; and this afforded a most noble prospect towards the chief part of the city, which lay westward. Josephus adds that the whole frame was raised upon stones polished to the highest degree of perfection, and so artificially put together that there was no joint to be discerned, no sign of any working-tools being upon them, but the whole looked liker the work of Providence and nature than the product of art and human invention."—*Jewish Antiquities*, book viii. c. 2.

plan and disposition of the Egyptian, or rather of all the sacred edifices of antiquity ; even its measurements are singularly in unison with some of the most ancient temples in Upper Egypt. It consisted of a propylæon, a temple, and a sanctuary ; called respectively the porch, the holy place, and the holy of holies. Yet in some respects, if the measurements are correct, the temple must rather have resembled the form of a simple Gothic church. In the front to the east stood the porch, a tall tower rising to the height of 210 feet. Either within, or, like the Egyptian obelisks, before the porch, stood two pillars of brass, by one account 27, by another above 60 feet high ; the latter statement probably including their capitals and bases. These were called Jachin and Boaz—durability and strength. The capitals of these were of the richest workmanship, with net-work, chain-work, and pomegranates. The porch was the same width with the temple, 35 feet ; its depth $17\frac{1}{2}$. The length of the main building, including the holy place, 70 feet, and the holy of holies 35 feet, was in the whole 105 feet ; the height $52\frac{1}{2}$. Josephus carries the whole building up to the height of the porch ; but this is out of all credible proportion, making the height twice the length, and six times the width. Along each side, and perhaps at the back of the main building, ran an aisle, divided into three stories of small chambers ; the wall of the temple being thicker at the bottom, left a rest to support the beams of these chambers, which were not let into the wall. These aisles, the chambers of which were appropriated as vestiaries, treasuries, and for other sacred purposes, seem to have reached about half-way up the main wall of what we may call the nave and choir : the windows into the latter were probably above them ; these were narrow, but widened inwards.”*

* History of the Jews, vol. i. p. 253. As the cubit was not a fixed standard of measure, but varied at different periods, and even according to

In connexion with the facts now stated, it ought to be mentioned that the principal parts of the Jewish worship were performed in the open air at the eastern end of the temple, where stood the great altar for burnt-sacrifices. The interior was reserved for those periodical and more special acts of devotion in which only the priests engaged; and every one who has read the books of Moses is fully aware that the most holy place was entered not more than once in the year by the representative of Aaron, when he made the great atonement for the sins of the people. The name of the temple, however, was extended to all its precincts, to the several courts which surrounded it, whether these were occupied by the sacred order, by the women, or by the proselytes. The publican who went up to the temple to pray had no right to penetrate within the sacred enclosure, but, "standing afar off," he lifted up his heart to the God of Abraham, whose nearer presence he was not allowed to approach.*

the nature of the substance which was measured, the dimensions of Solomon's temple cannot be determined with precision. Prideaux remarks, that it was "but a small pile of building, as containing no more than 150 feet in length and 105 in breadth, taking the whole of it together from out to out; which is exceeded by many of our parish churches."

The dimensions given, 1 Kings vi. 2, are as follows:—"The length threescore cubits, the breadth twenty cubits, and the height thirty cubits: And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house." The numbers stated in 2 Chronicles iii. 3, 4, agree with those now quoted; and if the cubit be taken at a foot and a half, the magnitude of the building will be somewhat less than that inserted in the text. The curious reader will find many interesting details in Lightfoot, vol. i. p. 1049, folio edition of his works.

* The several parts of the temple were by the Greeks distinguished by different names. What was properly the temple they called *ἱερόν*; and the courts and other parts of the temple they called *τοῖον*. Thus, when Zecharias is said (Luke i. 9) to have gone into the temple to burn incense, which was done in the sanctum, the word is *ἱερόν*; but when it is said (Luke, ii. 37) that Anna the prophetess departed not from the temple, that is, lived in that part of the court of the Israelites which was appropriated to religious women, the Greek word is *τοῖον*. And this observation holds good throughout the whole of the New Testament.—*Lamy de Tabernac.* lib. v. c. 5.

Seven years and some months were spent in the erection of this magnificent building, on which the Jewish writers have lavished all their powers of description. The gold, silver, brass, and precious stones, were accumulated without weight or measure ; and, if we may repose confidence in the knowledge of commentators, the embellishments of the room in which the ark of the covenant was deposited will be found to amount to more than four millions of our money.*

Ever since the period that Joshua entered the land of Canaan, the tabernacle was pitched in some part of the conquered territory. It remained long at Gilgal, and was afterwards removed to Shiloh ; which on that account became the metropolis of the Hebrew theocracy, and the chief seat of their worship. Till the latter days of Eli the ark was constantly retained in that consecrated tent ; but upon the defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines, the conquerors seized the holy chest with all its furniture, and carried it as a trophy into their own country. The ark seems not to have been restored to the tabernacle any more. Upon being returned by the enemy, it was placed at Kirjath-jearim, from whence it was taken by David and put under the charge of Obed-edom, and finally transported by the same pious king to his palace on Mount Sion. In the meanwhile, those who consulted the oracle of Jehovah relied entirely upon the ephod with its appendages, being the only symbol of the Divine Presence remaining in the house of God. This piece of dress, it is well known, had attached to it the Urim and Thummim, those mystic stones whose reflection indicated to such as were qualified to read the language of signs, the will of Heaven and the course of future events.†

* “ The overlaying of the holy of holies only, which was a room but 30 feet square and 30 feet high, amounted to 600 talents of gold, which comes to L.4,320,000 of our sterling money.”—*Prideaux*, vol. i. p. 148.

† 1 Samuel xxi. 9 ; xxx. 7.—During a certain period the tabernacle appears to have been at Nob. Ahimelech said unto David, “ The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold it is here wrapt in a cloth behind the ephod.”

As the principal object to be served by the temple was to afford a resting-place to the ark, the dedication was no sooner resolved upon than preparations were made for introducing it with due pomp into the sanctuary. In the presence of nearly the whole nation assembled at Jerusalem, including all the courses of priests and orders of Levites, the procession commenced from the city of David towards the portals of the splendid edifice, accompanied with many instruments of music and the cheerful sound of hymns. Psalms were selected or composed for this solemn service; and when the sons of Levi, bearing their precious burden, drew near the eastern porch, the singers burst forth in these enlivening strains, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in!" When the ark had been placed between the cherubim in the holy of holies, amid the loud praises of the sacred choir and the clangour of trumpets and cymbals, the king pronounced the affecting prayer by which the house was set apart for the worship of the God of Israel, and in which the divine blessing was invoked on all who should thereafter join in the venerable rites to which it was dedicated. This great festival was followed by an entertainment of a more ordinary nature, suitable to the joyful commemoration which usually marked the feast of tabernacles. Solomon, it is observed in the book of Chronicles, offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep, and continued the festivity seven days beyond the usual period. "And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents glad and merry in heart, for the goodness that the Lord had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people."*

* 2 Chronicles vii. 5—10; Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. viii. c. 4.

After finishing the magnificent structure now described, the luxurious monarch turned his attention to a residence for himself, which, by its grandeur and convenience, might bear some proportion to the wealth of his kingdom and the increasing refinement of his subjects. Thirteen years were spent in erecting a palace, the materials and architecture of which are highly extolled by the Jewish historian. It seems, however, to have answered the double purpose of a royal dwelling and of a court of justice, containing apartments at once extremely elegant and capacious. There was besides a section of the building reserved for the queen; and the reason assigned by the inspired annalist for this arrangement suggests the notion that, as she was an idolater, it was improper she should live in the house of his father, consecrated as it was, in some measure, by the presence of the ark. “And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of God hath come.”

But the prosperity of his government did not keep pace with the rapidity of his improvements and the magnificence of his works. Perhaps the vast extent of his undertakings may have led to unusual demands upon the industry of the people, and given occasion to those murmurs which could hardly be repressed even within the precincts of his court. Like his predecessor, too, he occasionally failed to illustrate the excellent precepts he propounded for the direction of others; and towards the close of his life particularly, the wisdom of his moral lessons was strangely contrasted with the practical follies which stand recorded against him in the sacred narrative. He totally disregarded the leading principles of the constitution constructed by Moses, and left for the guidance of all Hebrew kings; not only multiplying

horses to the extent of maintaining a large body of cavalry, and marrying many wives who turned away his heart, but even proceeding so far as to give his countenance to an idolatrous worship in the sight of the very temple which he had consecrated to Jehovah the God of all the earth.

It was in this reign that the limits of Jewish power attained their utmost range, comprehending even the remarkable district of Palmyrene, an extensive and fertile province in the midst of a frightful desert. There were in it two principal towns, Thapsacus and Palmyra, from the latter of which the whole country derived its name. Solomon took pleasure in adding to its beauty and strength, as being one of his main defences on the eastern border. It is mentioned in Scripture as Tadmor in the wilderness. Josephus calls it Thadamor; the Seventy recognise it under the name of Theadmor; and the Arabians at the present day keep alive the remembrance of its ancient glory, as Tadmīr and Tatmor. But of Solomon's labours not one vestige now remains. The inhabitants having revolted from the Emperor Aurelian, and pledged their faith to an adventurer called Achilles, who had assumed the purple, this splendid town was attacked and razed to the ground. Repenting of his hasty determination, the Roman prince gave orders that Palmyra should be immediately rebuilt; but so inefficient were the measures he adopted, or so imperfectly was he obeyed in their execution, that the city in the desert has been remarkable ever since only as a heap of ruins.*

* The first object that now presents itself to the traveller who approaches this forlorn place is a castle of mean architecture and uncertain origin, about half an hour's walk from it on the northern side. "From thence," says Mr Maundrel, "we descry Tadmor enclosed on three sides by long ridges of mountains; but to the south it is a vast plain which bounds the visible horizon. The barren soil presents nothing green but a few palm-trees. The city must have been of large extent, if we may judge from the space now taken up by the ruins; but as there are no traces of its walls, its real dimen-

Then it was that the predominant tribe of Judah lay as a lion, and as a young lion which no nation ventured to rouse. The Hebrews were the ruling people, and their empire the principal monarchy in Western Asia. From the borders of Phenicia to the Assyrian confines, from the sands of Egypt to the green hills of Lebanon, and even to the shores of the Persian gulf, the various tribes were subject to the sway of Solomon. The Canaanites, indeed, were not as yet either extirpated or altogether expelled, but they were serviceable and obedient to the king. The Philistines, more civilized and expert in war than the other natives of the land, were now tributary to him; and the same remark will apply to the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, the nomadic hordes of the desert, and even the Syrians of Damascus. The peace which he cultivated gave prosperity to all classes; and the trade he introduced brought wealth into the country, as well as the arts and sciences, the usual concomitants of a prosperous commerce. Many foreigners and even sovereign princes were attracted to Jerusalem, to converse with the royal sage, and to see the magnificent buildings which his taste and riches had reared. The regular progress of business; the judicious arrangements adopted to secure the country from foreign invasion and domestic troubles; the army, with its numerous legions consisting of infantry, horsemen, and chariots; the palaces, the household, and, above all, the good order in the administration of affairs, excited in the visitors a degree of admiration not less than they entertained for the wisdom and learning of this distinguished ruler.

But the sun of Solomon's fortune was dimmed with clouds towards its setting. His people became dissatisfied, and his

sions and form remain equally unknown. It is now a deplorable spectacle, inhabited by thirty or forty miserable families, who have built huts of mud within a spacious court which once enclosed a magnificent heathen temple." —*Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.*

enemies gradually recovered their strength. A youth named Adad, son of the prince of Edom whose forces Joab subdued, had found refuge in Egypt, where during some years he watched the course of events ; and finding at length that the king of Israel, by his licentious life and arbitrary government, had forfeited the goodwill of his subjects, he formed an alliance with Rezon, a freebooter, by whose aid he ascended the throne of Zobah, and forthwith prepared for war against the Hebrews. The names of both these adventurers appear to great advantage among the chiefs of Syria, who took up arms to recover the territory wrested from their countrymen by the soldiers of David ; and it is added, that they made frequent incursions into the land of the Jews, and spoiled it extensively even during the lifetime of Solomon.

The changing tide of affairs carried in the same direction the views of an ambitious officer, to whom the wise king had committed an important trust, as warden of the fortifications which he had recently drawn round the city. Jeroboam the son of Nebat, whose secret thoughts it is probable had already aspired to sovereignty, was informed by the prophet Ahijah that he was chosen by Divine Providence to be master of the ten tribes. But, in his first attempt to kindle the flames of a civil war, he found the love of the Hebrew people for the house of David much too strong to allow him any hope of success ; on which account he also fled into Egypt, where he was protected by Shishak, the Pharaoh of that age, who was not a little disposed to encourage his treasonable designs against his powerful neighbour. Such occurrences could not be contemplated without great uneasiness by a monarch whose penetration into men's motives would but too clearly anticipate the fatal issue to which they tended ; impressing upon his mind the melancholy conviction that he was about to leave to his son a tottering throne, and perhaps a disputed succession. After a reign of forty years, the first half of

which was equally splendid and happy, he departed this life long before he had attained to old age, but not before he had survived the respect of the pious and the confidence of the faithful among his subjects.

It is not unworthy of notice, that both Hiram, king of Tyre, and Solomon, whom he supplied with timber and artificers, are mentioned by Menander. This authentic historian was a native of Ephesus, and derived his materials from original sources in the several nations of which he wrote. The former of these sovereigns, whom he denominates Heromos, he celebrates as at once a hero and a lover of architecture; the other he extols merely as a sage. His words, as quoted by Josephus, are somewhat remarkable. "Upon the death of Abibalus, his son Hiram took the kingdom; he lived fifty-three years and reigned thirty-four. He raised a bank in what is called the Broad Place, and dedicated the golden pillar which is in Jupiter's temple: he also went and cut down timber on the mountain called Libanus, and got timber of cedar for the roofs of his edifices. He also pulled down the old temples and built new ones, and he also consecrated those of Hercules and Astarte. Under this king there was a younger son of Abdemon, who by his acuteness mastered the problems which the king of Jerusalem had transmitted to be solved.

The severity exercised by Solomon, and the exactions he had imposed upon the people towards the close of his reign, produced a strong reaction, the effects of which were immediately felt on the accession of his son Rehoboam. This prince, rejecting the advice of his aged counsellors and following that of the younger and more violent, soon had the misfortune to see the greater part of his kingdom wrested from him. In reply to the entreaty of his subjects, who solicited an alleviation of their burdens, he declared that, instead of requiring less at their hands, he should demand more. "My

father made your yoke heavy, I will add to your yoke ; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." Such a resolution, expressed in language so contemptuous, alienated from his government ten tribes, who sought a more indulgent master in Jeroboam, a declared enemy of the house of David. Hence arose the kingdom of Israel as distinguished from that of Judah ; and from the same source sprang the disgraceful contentions between these kindred states, which acknowledged one religion, and professed to be guided by the same law. Repeated attempts were subsequently made to reunite the Hebrews under one sceptre ; but arms and negotiation proved equally unavailing, until at length, about two hundred and seventy years after this melancholy schism, the younger people were subdued by Shalmaneser, the powerful monarch of Assyria, who carried them away captive into the remotest provinces of his vast empire.*

Jeroboam belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, the lineal descendants of Joseph, whose family in ancient times had received some obscure promises of a crown. But the pretensions of the son of Nebat had their chief support in the disaffection of the people, whose cries of revolt summoned him from his retreat in Egypt. To his lot fell the extensive territory of the Ten Tribes, with all the tributary nations as far as the Euphrates ; while the successor of Solomon retained only the lands of Judah and Benjamin, which, as Jerusalem was situated on the frontiers of both, were usually considered as one inheritance. The latter, in point of fact,

* With reference to the unseasonable menace of Rehoboam, it may be observed that the instrument commonly used to inflict corporal punishment was a rod. *Scorpions*, which were thongs set with sharp iron points or nails, called by the Romans *Horribilia*, were applied as a means of torturing only by those who had no relents of heart ; especially by cruel masters in the punishment of their slaves. The application of such an instrument for punishing was not authorized by the law of Moses.—*Jahn's Bib. Archæol.* p. 314.

was on most occasions comprehended in the former. To this division also belonged Philistia and Edom ; but even including these conquered districts, the dominions appropriated to the kingdom of Judah were scarcely equal to a fourth part of the wealthy provinces which had acknowledged the government of the late sovereign.*

The prophet Ahijah, who conferred upon the ambition of Jeroboam a divine sanction, assured him, at the same time, that if he conformed strictly to the law of Moses, the throne of Israel should continue in his family. But this prince from the very first shewed the utmost disregard for the divine statutes. Putting little confidence in the promise made to him by the man of God, and fearing that if the people were allowed to attend the national solemnities at Jerusalem they would return to their wonted allegiance, he set up two golden calves as images of Jehovah ; an imitation of the Apis and Mnevis of the Egyptians, among whom he had been long an exile. One of them was placed at Bethel, not far from Shechem, for the southern tribes, and the other at Dan for those of the north. Temples were built and altars erected for these idols ; priests were appointed from all the tribes without distinction, no regard being had to the prerogative of Levi ; and the sacerdotal functions were frequently performed even by the monarch himself. He appointed the festivals a month later than the periods fixed by their inspired legislator ; and commanded that they should be celebrated in the presence of the

* The texts usually supposed to indicate the contingent sovereignty of Joseph's descendants are Genesis xlix. 26, Deut. xxxiii. 16. "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills : they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." "And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush : let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren."

golden effigies, whom he announced to the people as the god of their fathers, an emblem of the power which had achieved their redemption from Egyptian bondage. *These arbitrary changes* became in the course of a few generations so closely interwoven with the constitution, that even the more pious of Jeroboam's successors did not venture to abolish them, nor to re-establish the authority of the original law as preserved in the sacred pages of the Pentateuch.*

The step now taken by the idolatrous monarch, the impure faith which he established, the frequent wars that ensued, and the treaties formed on either side with the Gentile nations on their respective borders, soon completed an entire estrangement between the separated tribes. Little attached to the native line of princes, the Israelites placed on the throne of Samaria a number of adventurers, who had no qualities to recommend them except military courage and an irreconcilable hatred towards the more legitimate sovereigns of Judah.

According to the system of chronology adopted in this work, the temple was founded 592 years after the departure of the children of Jacob from the land of Egypt, and 1016 before the birth of Christ. From the accession of Saul to the demise of Solomon there was an interval of about 120 years; a period in many respects so important to the history of the Hebrew people, and productive of so many changes in their manners and institutions, as to require a more minute survey than we have yet bestowed upon it. Compared with what they were under the Judges, all classes of society during the reign of their third king appear greatly improved; and the circumstances which in this retrospect attract most forcibly the attention of the reader, seem to have a special reference to the Religion, Literature, Arts, and Science of the Israelites immediately before the schism of the tribes.

* 1 Kings xi. 26—39.

CHAPTER II.

CONTAINING A VIEW OF THE RELIGION, LEARNING,
ARTS, AND SCIENCE OF THE HEBREWS IN THE DAYS
OF DAVID AND SOLOMON.

So much is said in the second volume on the religious belief and superstitions of the ancient Hebrews, that nothing important remains to be mentioned except the sacerdotal establishment of the temple ; the forms of divine worship which were observed in that holy place ; and the usages of the people who dwelt at a distance from Jerusalem during the intervals that divided the appointed seasons of their national festivals.

In considering such subjects, it ought never to be forgotten that the institutions of Moses, besides providing for the moral improvement of the children of Abraham, were especially calculated to preserve in the world the knowledge of the Divine unity ; and to oppose by precept, not less than by the severest sanctions of law, the absurd tenets of polytheism, at that time prevalent among all other nations. To accomplish this great end by means the most authoritative, that wise legislator represented himself as the minister of

Jehovah, the actual sovereign of the Israelites, who was pleased through his means to convey to them at once a code of laws, and a right to possess the land of Canaan, which, they were aware, had at an earlier period been occupied by their ancestors. In order to keep constantly before their eyes the main object of their polity, all their ceremonies had a reference to God, not only as the Creator of the universe, but also as the King of the Hebrews. They were accordingly taught to regard the tabernacle in the wilderness, as well as the magnificent structure consecrated in their capital, as at once the temple of the Lord of Hosts, and as the palace of their supreme ruler. It was for this reason that the crime of idolatry committed by any member of their tribes was considered as an act of rebellion, and visited with the penalty of death. Whosoever invited any one to the worship of a strange god was likewise accounted a traitor, and held worthy of a similar punishment; and he who knew of this guilt in another was bound to stand forth as public accuser, even though the unhappy individual were his wife, his daughter, or his son.

But, as has been remarked by various writers, this severe law applied only to the open act of idolatrous worship, and had no reference to private opinion. It was regarded as a civil rather than a religious ordinance; and the judge, accordingly, who took cognizance of the crime, while he had a right to decide upon the fact, was understood to go beyond his province if he ventured to pronounce with respect to the thoughts or feelings of the accused. In a word, the statute in question, as it bore a direct allusion to the sovereign rights of Jehovah as king of the Israelites, directed a scrutiny into the conduct of his subjects, not into their secret principles; and so far it differed from a religious injunction, strictly so called, because this last demands a surrender of the heart, an ardent attachment to the cause for which its

*services are required, and a union of fealty and love with the external act of obedience.**

The prohibition of idolatry, therefore, by means of capital punishment, was not, strictly speaking, founded on the speculative doctrine that there is only one true God, but rather on the principle that the Omnipotent having delivered the Israelites from slavery made them his own people; and, consequently, the restriction now mentioned extended even to those believers in polytheism who, actuated by the desire of enjoying the advantages of the Jewish government, had attached themselves to the several tribes. Still, though any such person had entertained a private conviction that there were more gods than one, he would not, by the Mosaic statutes, have become amenable to the magistrate, nor would any inquiry have been instituted with regard to his mode of adoration, provided it did not offend the public eye. In this indeed consisted the theocracy of the Hebrews, so far as such a form of government was peculiar to that people: Jehovah condescended to be the head of their civil as well as of their religious constitution, and therefore claimed submission to his authority, not so much in the light of his being the sovereign of all created things, as in that of his having declared himself the God of Abraham, through whose progeny all the kindreds of the earth were destined to receive the blessing of a pure religion.

It is only in connection with such views that the grounds of the Jewish economy can be fully understood, and that the worship sanctioned by Solomon, when he dedicated the temple, can appear to possess any interest in the eye of a

* Jahn's *Biblical Archæology*, section 214. Michaelis's *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*, articles 245, 246. There is a great sameness in the works of most writers on Jewish antiquities; the facts and even the language being borrowed with little reserve. Lewis, in his useful book, exhibits a striking example of this reliance upon his predecessors.

christian philosopher. *The ecclesiastical establishment formed at Jerusalem on the occasion now mentioned has been often described at great length by learned authors, in whose minds the importance of the subject seemed to justify the most minute details. No one is ignorant that the ritual of the tabernacle, so accurately delineated by Moses, served as a model for the worship at Jerusalem ; no alterations being made in it but such as arose from the simple circumstance that the sacred shrine had ceased to be migratory. David, in order to secure the proper administration of holy things, divided the sons of Aaron into twenty-four sections, or courses, who were to take the duty of the temple in rotation. A similar distribution of the Levites soon afterwards took place, who, no longer charged with the removal of the sacerdotal implements from station to station, had other functions assigned to them, whether as guardians of the consecrated walls, or as assistants to the priests ; or finally, as members of that chosen choir who, with voice and various instruments, celebrated the praises of Jehovah while the victim was consumed upon the altar.*

The Levites were originally divided into three families—those of Kohath, Gershon, and Merari ; but, as has just been hinted, they were afterwards distinguished by King David into three classes, which were again distributed into the same number of courses with the priests. The first class were “ to wait upon the sons of Aaron, for the service of the house of the Lord, to purify the holy things, to prepare the shew-bread, and flour, and wine, and oil, for the sacrifice.” On certain occasions, too, when the attendance of the people was unusually great, they assisted their brethren the priests in skinning or flaying the animals which were to be offered. The second class devoted their attention to the composition and performance of the sacred melodies ; while the third were occupied with the humbler duty of keeping

the gates, so as to prevent the entrance of whatever was unclean or might give offence.*

Every reader of Scripture is aware that only four of the sacerdotal courses returned from Babylon ; and that, in order to keep up the form of procedure recommended by David and instituted by Solomon, they were subdivided in such a manner as to supply the original number. The same system of rotation, and a similar assignment of duty to each individual by lot, were revived under the second temple, and appear to have continued till the final destruction of Jerusalem by the arms of the Romans.

It belongs not to a work of this nature to describe the various services, sacrificial and ritual, which employed the ministers of the Jewish church, now brought to the most splendid condition in which, viewed as a national establishment, it ever appeared. The vast expense lavished on the apparatus of divine worship by two pious kings, indicates not only a great increase in public wealth but also a marked improvement in the general taste ; and in no respect, perhaps, was the latter circumstance made more distinctly manifest than in the pains which were taken to exalt the adoration of the people, by means of sacred poetry, and the accompaniment of a refined music.

Of the poetical composition of the Hebrews too little is known to warrant any degree of dogmatism with respect to

* Dr Jennings, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, maintains that the Levites sometimes *killed* the sacrifice, "when there was more work of that sort than the priest could conveniently perform ; so that it was not necessary that the sacrifice should be slain by the priest, as some erroneously suppose." For this opinion he refers to 2 Chronicles xxix. 34, and xxxv. 10—14 ; but the reader will observe that in both these passages the word is not *slay* but *flay*. "The priests were too few, so that they could ~~not~~ flay all the burnt-offerings ; wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them." "And they killed the pass-over, and the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands, and the Levites flayed them." In this the good Dissenter had probably an hypothesis to support ; and the reading was made to bend to his purpose !

the various hypotheses which have been formed respecting it. No fragments of that species of writing remain to us but such as are found in the Sacred Scriptures ; and the knowledge of the very ancient language in which they are preserved is, even among the most learned archæologists, so extremely imperfect, that their opinions cannot be regarded as of more value than mere conjectures. The earliest authors who paid a systematic attention to this subject are Josephus, Origen, Eusebius, and St Jerome ; all of whom arrived at the conclusion, that the songs of Moses at least were composed in verse. The first of these writers maintains that the sublime odes just mentioned were framed on the model of heroic poetry, and chanted as such by his triumphant countrymen on the shores of the Red sea. Eusebius and Jerome adopted the same notion ; and the latter farther insisted that the Psalms were composed in Iambic, Alcaic, and Sapphic verse, after the manner of Pindar and Horace ; while the poetical pieces in Deuteronomy, Job, the books of Solomon, and the prophecies of Isaiah, were regularly constructed in hexameters and pentameters, according to the style of Ovid.*

With reference to such opinions, as entertained by very learned men, it is deserving of notice that Philo, who was well acquainted with Hebrew literature, states as an indisputable fact, that the poems transmitted from ancient times

* The principal opponents of Jerome are Scaliger (in Chron. Eusebii), Augustinus D'Eugubio, Louis Capellus, Martinus, Böhlius, Vasmuth, Pfeiffer, Grotius, Fleury, and Calmet. The first of these authors maintains that none of the Aramitic languages are capable of being reduced to feet : " quia id natura sermonis non patitur." D'Eugubio holds a similar opinion : " Carmen Hebraicum non idem est atque Græcorum et Latinorum ; Hebraicum nulla tempora, sed numerum duntaxat observat. Itque neque heroicum carmen apud Hebræos extat, neque Iambicum, alia genera ; sed simile quiddam et quale Barbari diversis ritibus canunt." See a " Dissertation on the Poetry of the Hebrews," by Fleury, page 21.

On the other side of the question the reader may be referred to Gomarus, the author of " Davidis Lyra," to Buxtorf, Louis de Dieu, Constantine L'Empereur, Heinsius, and Hottinger. See also Shuckford's Sacred and Profane History of the World Connected, vol. ii. p. 345.

were of different forms and measure. Some, says he, consist of three members, and are sung at the hour of going to the temple to worship ; others are hymns, to be recited at the altar whilst the sacrifices are offered and the libations poured out before the Lord ; some again are to be sung standing without any motion ; while a fourth description are designed for choirs and dances.

But no modern prosodist can be convinced that the psalms, songs, elegies, and predictions of the ancient Jews, displayed in their form any resemblance to the compositions of the Greeks and Romans. It is denied that they had either measure, properly so called, or rhyme corresponding to the method of French and English authors. The characteristic of Hebrew poetry, in short, is to be found in the loftiness of the thought rather than in the artifice of the expression ; in the sublime conception rather than in the regulated phrase. The language swells into magnificence, because the ideas are grand and the sentiments solemn ; and the inspired authors, filled with the surpassing greatness of their subject, sought utterance in the strongest and most picturesque terms that their native tongue could afford. In all nations, indeed, the first poetry was the language of passion, pronounced without much regard to order or arrangement, and not, until after many successful efforts had given rise to a sense of beauty in the mere collocation of words, reduced to any fixed rules as a standard of excellence. All original dialects, it has often been remarked, inasmuch as they are full of figures and natural description, are essentially poetical ; and in such circumstances nothing was required to draw the line between simple narrative and lyrical recitation, but a certain measure in the syllables which composed a sentence, and in the sequence of the tones with which it was spoken.*

* Fleury's Second Dissertation, as quoted above. No small difficulty has been occasioned to commentators by the *titles* of the Psalms, which in our version are allowed to remain untranslated. The ninth Psalm, for example,

As the oldest specimens in our possession seem to have been adapted for choral music, in that artless state of society when the human voice was accompanied with a single instrument, the sentiment to be expressed by the performers was usually allowed to dictate the structure of the ode put into their mouths. Alternate or antiphonial chanting, the accustomed manner of the Israelites both in the worship of God and in their festal commemorations, appears to have suggested to the writers of hymns the expedient of repeating the same thought in every stanza; so that the two sides of the choir, in their responses to each other, might harmonize in the ideas they expressed, and thereby add to the intensity of the devout feeling or to the importance of the moral saying embodied in the Psalm. Hence, perhaps, the origin of what is called *parallelism* in the more poetical portions of the Holy Scriptures. This literary contrivance, the principles of which are now well understood, is sometimes founded on the sameness and sometimes on the opposition of thought in the sentence, and is accordingly either synonymous or antithetical. Occasionally, indeed, it shews itself merely in the construction, and is quite inde-

is directed to the chief musician upon Muthlabben, which, according to Luther, means "to be sung by the beautiful youth." The superscription of the fifty-sixth is *Jonat Elem Rechokim*, which is said to mean the "mute dove among strangers." It is generally understood that those expressions were the first words of divine songs known in the time of David, to the tune of which certain Psalms were to be sung. In short, the said titles or superscriptions, which, it will be observed, have no relation to the subject of the Psalms at the head of which they are placed, were, it is very probable, nothing more than the *names of tunes*. This conclusion, too, will be more readily admitted by those who are aware that the same method was adopted during the Middle Ages in appropriating the ecclesiastical melodies: the first words of an old hymn, when placed at the head of a new song, denoted the air to which the composer had arranged his canticle. We are told, moreover, that in the liturgies of the present Syrian churches, at the commencement of the church-hymns, the first words of some more ancient songs are placed to mark the tune to which the new hymns are to be sung.—*Burder's Oriental Literature*, vol. ii. p. 9—12. *Forkel's General History of Music*, vol. i. p. 140.

pendent of the sense. In many cases it consists only of two members ; in other instances, there are three ; and in some there are four,—the first answering to the third, and the second to the fourth. Sometimes the parallelism displays itself in five verses or members, the two first and the two last being parallel, and the middle one unequal ; or the first being parallel to the third, and the second to the fourth, and the fifth being unequal. In some instances the structure is quite irregular and incapable of being reduced to any of the common forms of parallelism ; a peculiarity which may, however, be ascribed to the ignorance of the moderns on the subject of Hebrew poetics, rather than to any want of skill in the original author. Nor is it denied, even by those who are the least inclined to acknowledge a rhythmical adjustment in the sacred songs of the Israelites, that in various parallelisms there is a similarity in the cadences, which gives to them an unusually fine effect, and seems manifestly to be the result of art.*

The opinions of recent authors might perhaps be reconciled with those entertained by some of the Christian fathers, were the acceptance of the term “ measure ” restricted to the length of sentences rather than to the prosodial quantity of the successive syllables which compose them. It is admitted by both parties that the verses are very unequal in length ; the shortest consisting of six or seven syllables, while the longest extend to twelve or fourteen ; and it is observed that the close of the sentence generally falls where the members of the sentences are divided. In fact, the verses appear rather like distinct aphorisms or pious remarks, than as the constituent parts of a poetical stanza in the strict sense of the word ; though, owing to the studied balance of the parallelisms, and the recurrence of the cadence, it cannot be

* Jahn's Biblical Antiquities, section 90.

denied that a certain number of lines, two, three, four, or five, according to the particular style of the composition, are comprehended in this metrical scheme.

There is also a special variety, principally intended, it should seem, for the assistance of the memory; in which when there is little connection between the sentiments, a sort of method is preserved by the initial letters of each line or stanza following the order of the alphabet. Of this there are several examples among the sacred poems; and in these the verses are so exactly defined that it is impossible to mistake them for prose. This will appear more manifest if they be attentively considered and compared with one another, since they are in general so regularly accommodated that word answers to word, and almost syllable to syllable. It is admitted that in this case an appeal can scarcely be made to the ear; but the eye, nevertheless, will distinguish the poetic division and arrangement, and satisfy every candid judge that some labour has been employed in adapting the words to the measure, and both to the thought or emotion which the author meant to express.*

It may not perhaps be unseasonable to mention more fully, as one of the characteristics of poetical composition among the ancient Hebrews, that some of the Psalms, part of the Proverbs, and also of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, are written after the manner of an acrostic; having the first letter of the initial words of the successive verses regulated by the order of the alphabet. For example, the first verse or line of the twenty-fifth Psalm begins with *aleph*, and the last verse with *thau*; the whole being twenty-two in number, corresponding to that of the Hebrew characters. The hundred and nineteenth, again, on a similar principle, is divided into twenty-two sections, marked Aleph, Beth, Gimel, and

* Lowth's Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, vol. i. p. 57.

so on throughout the whole series of letters; and every Hebrew scholar knows, that each verse in the first section begins with an A, in the second section each begins with a B, and every verse in section third begins with a G; a method which is observed to the end of the Psalm.*

Such a device indicates a taste which had not yet received all the refinement that the progress of letters usually confers. In the absence of multiplied copies of the sacred psalmody, an artificial method would no doubt assist the recollection of the worshippers, and might also impress upon the heart the divine truths which were intended at once to guide, to encourage, and to console. Similar expedients have been elsewhere adopted in like circumstances; and in this respect, the authors of the inspired poetry used in the Jewish temple were guided by a due regard to the necessities of the people whose spiritual welfare they laboured to promote.

It has been justly observed, that many of the Psalms are commemorative of the miraculous interpositions of God in behalf of the chosen people. Many, it is probable, were composed upon the occasion of remarkable passages in David's life, his dangers, his afflictions, his deliverances. But of those which relate to the public history of the natural Israel, there are few in which the fortunes of the mystical Israel, the christian church, are not adumbrated; and of those which allude to the life of David, there are none in which the prophetic "Son of David" may not be esteemed the principal though not the immediate subject.

The Psalms go, in general, under the name of the pious king just mentioned, because he gave a regular form to the devotional part of the Jewish service. He was himself a great composer, both in poetry and music, and a munificent pa-

* The portions of ancient Scripture distinguished by acrostics are Psalms xxv. xxxiv. xxxvii. cxl. cxlii. cxix. cxlv. Proverbs xxxi. from verse x. to the end, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, except the last chapter.

tron, no doubt, of arts in which he himself so much delighted and excelled. The Psalms, however, appear to be the composition of various authors in different ages, some much more ancient than the time of David, some of a much later age. Of many this monarch was undoubtedly the author; and that those of his composition were prophetic we have his own authority, which may be allowed to overpower a host of modern expositors. For thus at the close of his life he describes himself and his sacred songs:—"David, the son of Jesse, said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, 'The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.'"^{*}

A distinguished author has remarked, that "The Psalms are all poems of the lyric kind; that is, adapted to music, but with great variety in the style of composition. Some are simply odes. An ode is a dignified sort of song, narrative of the facts either of public history or of private life, in a highly adorned and figured style. But the figure in the Psalms is that which is peculiar to the Hebrew language, in which the figure gives its meaning with as much perspi-

* 2 Samuel xxiii. 1, 2.—In a learned work, the "Sabeian Researches," by Mr Landseer, an attempt is made to prove that the term Asaph at the head of several of the Psalms is not a proper name, but an appellative, denoting a class of wise men or astronomical diviners. "My general inferences are," says he, "that none of the Psalms preceded by the word Asaph are the compositions of an individual Levite of that name, but that all are simply directed to be sung or performed either by the chief *Ashaph*, or by that sacerdotal order which were styled *Ashaphim* (by Cruden and others written *Asaphim*), of whom Maschil was in his day the chief, or as the Hebrew and the older English Bibles express, that they were committed to the Ashaph, he being responsible for the judicious selection of the performers. I am not sure that the individual of David's time, who is mentioned with honour in the first book of Chronicles, was other than the chief blessing, being also a musician. He might be Ashaph both by name and office. And as we read of no Ashaph of earlier date, it might not be unfair to conclude that the Ashaphim of subsequent times have been so called from the celebrated singer and utterer of heavenly things who lived during the reign of David."—Pp. 317, 318.

entity as the plainest speech. Some are of the sort called Elegiac, which are pathetic compositions upon mournful subjects. Some are Ethic, delivering grave maxims of life, or the precepts of religion, in solemn but for the most part simple strains. Some are Ænigmatic, delivering the doctrines of religion in ænigmata, contrived to strike the imagination forcibly, and yet easy to be understood. In all these the author delivers the whole matter in his own person. But a very great, I believe the far greater part are a sort of dramatic ode, consisting of dialogues between persons sustaining different characters. In these dialogue-psalms, the persons are frequently the psalmist himself, or the chorus of priests and Levites, or the leader of the Levitical band, opening the ode with a proem declarative of the subject, and very often closing the whole with a solemn admonition drawn from what the other persons say. The other persons are Jehovah, sometimes as one, sometimes as another of the three persons; Christ in his incarnate state, sometimes before, sometimes after his resurrection; the human soul of Christ as distinguished from the divine essence. Christ in his incarnate state is personated, sometimes as a priest, sometimes as a king, sometimes as a conqueror; and in those Psalms in which he is introduced as a conqueror, the resemblance is very remarkable between him and the warrior on the white horse in the Book of Revelation, who goes forth with a crown on his head and a bow in his hand conquering and to conquer. And the conquest in the Psalms is followed, like the conquest in the Revelation, by the marriage of the conqueror. These are circumstances of similitude which, to any one versed in the prophetic style, prove beyond a doubt that the mystical conqueror is the same person in both.”*

* The Book of Psalms translated from the Hebrew; with notes explanatory and critical. By Samuel Horsley, LL.D., late Lord Bishop of St Asaph. Vol i. pp. xv. xvi. •

It has been already mentioned, that the psalter was usually sung or chanted by the choirs of priests and Levites during the sacrificial part of the temple-service. Some of them were exclusively adapted for festivals and other days of commemoration, while a few appear to have been composed for the nocturnal duties of the sacred bands ; those who by night stood in the house of God, or, walking around its holy precincts, guarded every approach to the consecrated edifice.

Some of the Psalms are in the authorized version of the English Bible denominated “ Songs of Degrees ;” an expression which indicates nothing so clearly as that the translators could not affix any precise meaning to the words. As the original term here rendered degrees literally signifies steps, it may be presumed that the odes in question were recited at the vestibule of the temple, on the stair which led to the door of the holy place. The special occasions for which they were composed cannot be accurately determined by their import ; but it is not improbable that, as the priests stood at one end of the great altar of burnt-offerings and the Levites at the other, the solemn hymns under consideration were calculated for some particular part of the accustomed ritual.*

* The phrase שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלִית is translated by the Seventy ὕμνος τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν, which literally means the “ Song of the Steps.” The word ἀναβαθμός is used in the Septuagint version not fewer than fourteen times ; and in ten of these instances it denotes unambiguously the stair of a house, or the steps of a throne. In the other cases it is applied to the degrees on the dial of Ahaz. Hence an attempt has been made to connect the fifteen Psalms of Degrees with the ten degrees the shadow of the sun moved backward when the life of Hezekiah was prolonged. Lightfoot, accordingly, writes as follows : “ Hezekiah lived these fifteen years in safety and propriety, having humbled himself before the Lord for his pride to the ambassadors of Babel. The degrees of the sun’s reversing, and the fifteen years of Hezekiah’s life prolonging, may call to our minds the fifteen Psalms of Degrees, viz. from Psalm 120, and forward : These were Hezekiah’s songs that were sung to the stringed instruments in the house of the Lord (Isaiah xxxviii. 20) ; whether these were picked out by him let it be left to censure.” But the learned author admits, at the same time, that the Jews hold they were called *Psalms of De-*

Besides this reasonable service introduced by David and his son into the worship of Jehovah, the Hebrews still enjoyed the assurance of the Divine Presence under the form of the shechinah, or marvellous light, which dwelt between the cherubim over the mercy-seat. As that glorious vision was never witnessed except by the high-priest, and by him only on the great day of atonement or annual expiation, its sensible qualities were never clearly understood. Perhaps it was deemed unholy and presumptuous to make any inquiry relative to its mysterious nature, or to indulge an undue curiosity respecting its effects on the human eye. It was one of the five gifts of Heaven to the chosen people, which were continued to them so long as they enjoyed their independence, but which could not be restored by the power

grees, because they were sung on the fifteen stairs that rose into the courts of the temple.—*Lightfoot's Works*, folio, vol. i. p. 111.

In the thirty-second volume of Ugolini's "*Antiquitatum Sacrarum Thesaurus*" there are several tracts on the Psalms of Degrees, the word *Selah*, and the Music of the Hebrews.

Pfeiffer, in his "*Specimen de Psalmis Graduum*," exhibits twelve opinions drawn from the works of learned men, and subjoins his own "*Decisio*" as follows:—"Psalmi Graduum dicti sunt quod a Musicis Davidis solemniter decantarentur ad gradus Arcis Regiæ, in Dei gloriam quod sedem istam firmasset."

Calmet thinks the Psalms or Songs of Degrees have a reference to the ascension of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, which in the Bible is represented as a *going up*.

For the supposed meanings of the term *Selah*, obviously a musical mark or direction, see Paschius de *Selah*; Aug. Calmet de *Sela*; and Aug. Pfeiffer de *voce vexata Sela*.

"It does not appear that the poetry of the Hebrews ever underwent any change. We find it the same in the time of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, and of Daniel, as it was in the time of Moses; and the hymns or songs in the New Testament are the same with those in the Old. It is hence concluded that there was little method or artifice in the structure of their poems, as it is very improbable that men would have kept to the same style and manner of writing, had it been reduced to the form of rules, for so long a space as a thousand years. When Moses wrote, most certainly there was no poetry reduced to the rules of art in any part of the world. The Chaldeans and Egyptians, the most ancient nations among whom literature was cultivated, seem not to have had the least knowledge of a poetry confined to a certain number of feet, or a certain quantity of long and short syllables."—*Calmet on Poetry of the Hebrews*, p. 31.

or favour of any earthly prince. The decree of Cyrus, though it authorized the representatives of the nation to rebuild the house of God, failed to rekindle the holy fire upon the altar, to revive the spirit of prophecy, to discover the ark of the covenant, to call back the majestic glory of the shechinah, or to invest the successor of Aaron once more with the privilege of looking into the future through the medium of Urim and Thummim.

With regard to the cherubim themselves, over or amidst whose wings was diffused the divine light now mentioned, there still prevails a great discrepancy of opinion. From the instructions given to Moses in the book of Exodus, it might be inferred that the two figures which covered the surface of the mercy-seat bore some resemblance to animals with which the people of Israel were familiar. They were formed of beaten gold, and so placed with reference to the ark, that while they looked towards each other the tips of their wings met in the centre over the symbol of atonement, and thereby overshadowed it. But it is doubtful whether they bent forward over the holy shrine or stood in an erect position at either end of it. From the dimensions ascribed to the cherubim in the temple, it has been concluded that they were stationed in an upright posture at the two extremities, and that, while they were in contact with each other, their wings reached to the side-walls of the sanctuary.

Josephus, who in Jewish affairs is justly esteemed a high authority, remarks, in the third book of his Antiquities, that the two images which the Hebrews call cherubim were flying creatures, but their form, he adds, was not like that of any of the creatures which men have seen, though Moses said he had seen such beings near the throne of God. In the eighth book of the same work he mentions that Solomon, in furnishing the holy of holies, the breadth of which was twenty cubits, and the length the same, dedicated two che-

rubim of solid gold ; the height of each of them was five cubits ; they had each of them two wings stretched out as far as five cubits ; wherefore he set them up not far from each other, that with one wing they might touch the southern wall of the secret place, and with another the northern ; their other wings, which were joined to each other, were a covering to the ark, which was set between them. But nobody can tell or even conjecture what was the shape of these cherubim.*

Most interpreters, ancient as well as modern, suppose those hieroglyphical creatures to have possessed the form of human beings with the addition of wings ; grounding their opinion on the description supplied by Moses, that they had faces and looked towards each other. Such reasoning, it must be admitted, is not conclusive ; for it is certain that what Ezekiel in one place represents as the face of an ox, he describes in another as the face of a cherub. Hence others have imagined that their shape was intended to set forth the appearance of flying oxen, and they have attempted to fortify this interpretation by reminding the reader that the name is derived from a term in the Arabic, Syriac, and Chaldean languages, which signifies to plough. The natural meaning, therefore, of the word כִּרֻב cherub, they contend, must be referred to an animal used for ploughing, which in eastern countries was generally the ox. This, too, seems to have been the ancient opinion, preserved by tradition, concerning the shape of the cherubim with the flaming sword which guarded the tree of life. It may be farther observed that, as in the estimation of the prophet the face of a cherub and the face of an ox were the same, so St John, in his

* Ὡς τετιγμένα μαρμαίον ὁδοῦν τῶν ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων ἰσχυρισμῶν τετραπλάσια. Μωϋσ. φέρει τὰ ἄνω καὶ τὰ ὑποῦ προσέβηται ἰσχυρισμῶν. Lib. iii. c. 3.
Τὸς δὲ χερουβίμ, ὁδοῦν δὲ ὁδοῦ τῶν ἡσυχῶν ἰσχυρῶν ἰσχυρισμῶν. Lib. v.

account of the four living creatures which surround the throne of the Omnipotent, and which, in all respects, seem to coincide with those recognised in the vision of Ezekiel, calls that the calf which the other denominates the ox or cherub.*

The coincidence now stated, which in every point of view must prove interesting to the theological student, will appear of still greater importance when viewed as the means of explaining the easy defection of the Hebrews from the worship of the tabernacle in the wilderness and of the temple at Jerusalem, and the insane superstition which ever and anon led them to adore the image of a calf. If the cherubim which encompassed the ark of the covenant, and with their wings formed a throne for the visible presence of the Lord of Hosts, bore any resemblance to the quadruped just specified, a reason may be found for the propensity manifested by the descendants of Jacob, which on every other ground appears equally odious and unaccountable. The delay of Moses in the Mount excited the fears of his people that he had either perished or forsaken them, and they accordingly entreated Aaron to make a god who should go before them as their guide and protector. To this request, apparently

* Multi putant ex Ezechiele se colligere illos ex homine, leone, bove, et aquila mixtam habuisse formam. Fateor ex citatis locis valde verisimili ratione colligi, Cherubinos ad bovis figuram magis accessisse. Itaque Cherubinum appellari nonnulli volunt a Chaldaeo et Syro verbo כרוב *cherub*, quod *arare* significat, vel *aratro terram vertere*, quia bovis proprium est officium. Sed, sive Jeroboam id repexerit, cum fabricavit virtulos, sive Aaronem, aut Aegyptios sibi proposuerit imitandos, nullum habuit in Cherubinos causae suae patrocinium.—*Bocharti Opera*, tom. ii. p. 258.

The figure of a bull, as emblematic of vigour, wat hfulness, or fidelity, was frequently employed by the ancients in their mystical emblems. It is thought, accordingly, that Ovid's fable concerning Jason's golden fleece being guarded by brazen-footed bulls, was perhaps grounded upon the tradition of those original cherubim, which, with their flaming swords, were placed at the gates of Paradise.

Ecce adamanteis vulcanum naribus efflant

Aripedes tauri,

Metamorph. lib. vii. v. 104.

so absurd, the high-priest acceded ; and having molten an image, and fashioned it with a graving-tool, he presented the golden calf to the anxious multitude, and said, This is thy God, O Israel, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt. It is remarkable, however, that the idol thus procured was not meant to supersede the reverence due to the Almighty, the supreme sovereign of heaven and earth ; for no sooner were their apprehensions relieved by obtaining a tutelar divinity, than they listened to a proclamation issued by Aaron, informing them that on the following day a festival would be celebrated in honour of Jehovah. Besides, it was soon after this apostasy that Moses gave orders to fabricate the cherubim, and place them in the interior part of the tabernacle. And Bezaleel “ made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy-seat ; one cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side : out of the mercy-seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy-seat, with their faces one to another ; even to the mercy-seat-ward were the faces of the cherubims.”*

* Exodus xxxii. 1—5 ; xxxvii. 7—10. On this occasion, it should seem, Moses, because of the hardness of the people's hearts and their propensity to Egyptian idolatry, yielded to their wishes ; but while, because of transgression, he added to the multiplicity of rites, he never failed to raise the thoughts of the enlightened worshipper to that “ righteousness” which was the “ end of the law.”

Julius Bate, in his *Critica Hebræa* (p. 288), maintains that the “ appearing of Jehovah on the mercy-seat between the cherubs was the word *Jehovah*.” Mr Landseer, in his *Sabæan Researches*, holds a similar opinion. “ I should imagine that the Asherim of the Hebrews were surmounted by the name of the Lord Jehovah, expressed in Hebrew characters, which contained a *literal mystery*. Let the reader refer to those passages in the lamentations of the Hebrew poets, where the phrase the name of the Lord occurs, and let him observe the mingled sentiment of woe and detestation that is felt by the author of some of the Psalms, when the Babylonian invaders had violated the sanctuary, and cast the name of the Lord to the ground.”

On the subject of the *shechinah*, or bright effulgence, where the name of

When Jeroboam withdrew the ten tribes from the sceptre of Judah, he had recourse to an expedient similar to that which had been suggested by the infidelity of his countrymen in the desert of Zin. He “said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam, king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam, king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.”*

The supposition that the cherubim in the temple presented a certain degree of likeness to a calf, removes the main difficulty which besets the mind of the unlearned reader when contemplating the defection of the ten tribes from the religion of their fathers. It appears wonderful, to use the words of a modern author, “not only that Jeroboam himself should be so stupid as to set up calves for gods, but that the bulk of the nation should so readily fall into such senseless idolatry; but it relieves our conceptions, if we consider these calves as nothing but cherubim, the very same sort of figures that were placed in the temple by God’s own appointment: so that Jeroboam not only set up the worship of the same God, and in the same modes and forms that were practised at Jerusalem, but the same symbols of the Divine Presence to which the people had been accustomed.”†

presence of Jehovah was manifested, the reader may consult Lightfoot, Bochart, Reland, Lewis, Jennings, Jahn, Michaelis, Lowman, and Whitley, and some of the tracts in the great work of Ugolini, the *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum*.

* 1 Kings xii. 28, 29.

† Jennings’s *Jewish Antiquities*, book ii. c. i.

orthodox kings were seldom extended to destroy those profane symbols which polluted the groves of Samaria, and were to be seen under the green trees in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It was the God of Abraham to whom they professed to lift up their hearts and present their offerings of gratitude; but they took pleasure in performing their rites after the manner of the heathen among whom they dwelt. The host of heaven, which, in their eyes, seemed to rule the seasons, were supposed also to exercise a weighty influence on the fortunes of men; and to the sun, moon, and stars, accordingly, as they walked in their brightness, the children of Israel were ever ready to make an oblation, as well as to consult their movements, their signs, and aspects, for the secret knowledge of future events. They mixed up with the gross ceremonies of paganism a species of astrology, which conferred upon the visible objects of their worship an intelligence and design belonging only to the great First Cause whence they derived their origin.

Besides the more public and solemn acts of propitiation and atonement which were performed at Jerusalem, as well in the daily service as at the stated festivals of the whole nation, there were gradually introduced among the people meetings for religious instruction and prayer. It is indeed difficult to determine at what epoch the Hebrews first instituted those occasional assemblies which were called synagogues,—a name afterwards more frequently applied to the buildings in which they convened. There is no doubt, however, that at an early period a more ordinary kind of religious duty was solemnized at certain stations within the several tribes, in the intervals between the national feasts; having some reference, it is probable, to the weekly return of the Sabbath, and of the new moons. For this purpose the people appear at first to have repaired to high places, where they might more readily perceive the lunar crescent,

and give utterance to their accustomed expression of gratitude and joy. This species of sabaism was connived at by the priests and Levites, who found it impossible to check altogether the propensity of their brethren towards a worship recommended to the imagination by so many delightful and even sublime accompaniments, the mountain-top and the leafy grove. Samuel himself, the prophet and judge, saw the expediency on one occasion of building an altar unto the Lord on Ramah, which is called the high place ; and in the reign of Solomon the same practice was continued, “ because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord in those days.”

The earliest allusion to the *proseucha*, or house of prayer, is to be found in the seventy-fourth Psalm, where the writer, describing the havock committed by the Assyrians, remarks, “ They have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land.” From this statement alone it might be inferred that such edifices were common before the Babylonian captivity ; but perhaps there is a more direct proof in the words of St James, who observes, that “ Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day.” The duty in those congregations, which was confined to devotional exercises and exposition of the Scriptures, was usually performed by that section of the Levites denominated the scribes ; the higher office of sacrifice, the scene of which was first the tabernacle and afterwards the temple at Jerusalem, being confined to the priests, the sons of Aaron. It is not improbable, that in remote places where the population was small, the inhabitants met for divine worship in the dwelling of the Levite ; a conjecture which derives some plausibility from an affecting incident mentioned in the second book of the Kings. When the son of the woman of Shunem died, “ she called unto her husband and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the

young men and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God. And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go ; it is neither new moon nor Sabbath.” It is reasonable to conclude that on these days it was customary to repair to the residence of the holy man for the discharge of certain religious duties.*

It has been already mentioned that, at the first settlement of the Promised Land, the tabernacle was established at Shiloh, a village in Ephraim, at that time the most numerous and powerful of all the tribes. The profanity or disobedience of the people in this district led to the removal of the Divine Presence, the symbols of which were thenceforth to be deposited at Jerusalem. Hence the origin of the bitter feud which subsisted so long between Ephraim and Judah, and afterwards between the Jews and Samaritans, with regard to the spot where Jehovah ought to be worshipped. Each laid claim to a divine appointment ; neither would yield to the other, nor hold the slightest intercourse in their adoration of the same great Being ; and this question, so fruitful in strife and enmity, remained as far as ever from being determined when the Romans under the emperor Titus finally cut down all distinctions by their victorious arms.

A minute account of the Hebrew festivals in a work of this nature would be regarded by most readers as an anomaly. Still the three great institutions, at which all the males of the nation were commanded to appear before Je-

* “ You must take notice that the Jews, besides their Tabernacle or Temple, which was the only place for sacrifice, had (first or last) two sorts of place, for religious duties, the one called *Proseuchae*, the other *Synagogues*. The difference between them was this : *Proseucha* was a plot of ground encompassed with a wall, or some other like mound or enclosure, and open above, much like to our courts ; the use properly for prayer, as the name *proseucha* importeth. A synagogue was *Edificium tectum*, a covered edifice, as our houses and churches are, where the law and the prophets were read and expounded, and the people instructed in divine matters. From whence also you may gather that synagogues were within the cities as *proseuchas* were without.”—*Mede*, b. i. dis. 18.—*Lewis’s Hebrew Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 326.

hovah, are so frequently mentioned in the sacred history, that it may not be improper to specify their general objects.*

The feast of the passover, comprehending that of the unleavened bread, commemorated the deliverance of this wonderful people from the tyranny of Pharaoh. It was commanded to be kept on the fifteenth day of the first month, to last seven days, and to begin, according to the manner of all their anniversaries, on the previous evening at the going down of the sun. Following the European mode of calculation, it may be said that the festival commenced on the night of the fourteenth day of the month Abib; and this distinction, apparently unimportant, tends to throw a valuable light on some facts recorded in the evangelical narrative. The rule enjoined by Moses was, “from even unto even shall ye celebrate your Sabbaths;” and the weekly rest, accordingly, began on the evening of Friday, and terminated at the going down of the sun on Saturday. In like manner began and ended all their solemnities; the evening and the morning making one day. But the Jews, in the concluding period of their state, had innovated so far on the Mosaical institution as to prohibit the passover from being observed on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, and to appoint the celebration of it on the following day. The year in which our Lord suffered death, this great annual feast fell on a Friday—beginning, agreeably to the practice just described, at sunset on Thursday evening; and the Redeemer, accordingly, who came to fulfil all righteousness, ate the paschal supper with his disciples on the evening of Thursday. But the Jews, in obedience to their new regula-

* “*Institutis tribus festis majoribus, Paschale, Pentecoste, et Festo Tabernaculorum, in memoriam trium beneficiorum insignium, quæ Deus in populum Israelitarum contulit, Egressum ex Egypto, Iationem Legis, et Possessionem Terræ.—Relandi, Ant. Heb. p. 411.*

tion, did not observe that rite until the evening of the next day ; and hence, the early part of Friday being the “ preparation, they would not go into the judgment-hall lest they should be defiled.” They were making ready to eat the passover at the going down of the sun. For the same reason they besought Pilate that the bodies might be removed from the crosses on which they were suspended ; intimating to the governor that the day which was to begin at sunset was a high day, being in fact not only the Sabbath, but also the paschal feast, both extremely solemn in the estimation of every true Israelite.

On this ground may be fully explained the apparent discrepancy between the account of the last supper as given by St John and that of the other evangelists. The latter inform the christian world that their master celebrated the passover on Thursday evening, at the period when the first day of the yearly festival commenced ; whereas the beloved disciple relates that the next morning was still the preparation for that ordinance, which was to be observed by the whole nation the ensuing night. Both statements are perfectly correct. The Redeemer adhered to the day fixed by the original institution, while the priests, scribes, and lawyers, followed the rule established by the Sanhedrim, which threw the festival a day beyond its proper time. The preparation, indeed, of every festival began only at three o'clock, called by the Hebrews the ninth hour, and continued till the close of the day or the disappearance of the sun. It was at that hour, accordingly, that the Jews entreated Pilate to take down the bodies ; because they deemed it extremely unbecoming that any token of a curse, or capital punishment, should meet the public eye while making ready to kill the paschal lamb.

The feast of Pentecost was an annual offering of thanksgiving to Jehovah for having blessed the land with increase.

It took place fifty days after the passover, whence arose the descriptive term applied to it in the Greek version of the *Holy Scriptures*. Another appellation was the *Feast of Weeks*, for the reason assigned by the divine lawgiver. "Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee : beginning to number the seven weeks from such time as thou putteth the sickle to the corn. And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God with a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hand, in the place which Jehovah shall choose to place his name there. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt." *

This was a very suitable celebration in an agricultural society, where joy is always experienced upon the gathering in of the fruits of the earth. The Hebrews, on that happy occasion, were especially desired to contrast their happy condition, as freemen cultivating their own lands and collecting the produce, with the miserable estate from which they had been rescued by the good providence of Jehovah. The month of May witnessed the harvest-home of all Palestine in the days of Moses as well as at the present time ; and no sooner was the pleasant toil of filling their barns completed, than all the men repaired to the holy city with the appointed tribute in their hands and the song of praise in their mouths. Jewish antiquaries relate, that there was combined with this eucharistical service a commemoration of the wonders which took place at Mount Sinai, when the Lord condescended to pronounce his law in the ears of his people. The history of the Christian religion has supplied a greater event, which at once supersedes the pious recollections of the Hebrew, and touches the heart of the worshipper with the feeling of a more enlightened gratitude.

* Deut. xvi. 9—12.—For some judicious observations on the "Name of God" under its different forms, as successively made known to the patriarchs and to Moses, see Dr Shuckford's second volume, p. 451—467 ; edit. 1803.

The termination of the vintage was marked with a similar expression of thanksgiving uttered by the assembled tribes in the place which had received the "name" of *Jehovah*. The precept enjoining this pious observance is given in the following terms : " On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days. And ye shall take unto you, on the first day, the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook ; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt."*

This festival was of the most lively and animated description, celebrated with a joyous heart, and under the canopy of heaven, in a most delightful season of the year. If more exquisite music and more graceful dances accompanied the gathering in of the grapes on the banks of the *Cephisus*, the tabret, the viol, and the harp, which sounded under the walls of the sacred metropolis, were not wanting in sweetness and gayety ; and, instead of the frantic riot of satyrs and bacchanals, the rejoicing was chastened by the solemn recollections with which it was associated in a manner remarkably pleasing and picturesque.†

The Feast of Trumpets had a reference to the mode practised by several ancient nations, for announcing the commencement of seasons and epochs. The beginning of every month was made known to the inhabitants of Jerusalem by the sound of musical instruments. " Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast-day ; for this was a statute for Israel, a law of the God of

* Levit. xxiii. 39—43.

† History of the Jews, vol. i. p. 115.

Jacob." As the first day of the moon in September was the beginning of the civil year, the festivity was greater and more solemn than on other occasions. The voice of the trumpets waxed louder than usual, and the public mind was instructed by a grave assurance from the mouth of the proper officer, that another year was added to the age of the world. "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein; but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord."*

Among the wise and beneficial institutions of Moses, a high place must be assigned to the Jubilee which occurred periodically after the lapse of forty-nine years, or, as the Jews themselves were wont to express it, after a week of Sabbaths. The uses of this generous enactment are known to every reader, more especially as they respected personal freedom, and the restoration of lands and houses. Great care was taken by the Hebrew legislator to prevent an accumulation of property in one individual, or even in one tribe. Nor was his anxiety less to preclude an alienation of territorial wealth, whether by sale, mortgage, or marriage. With this view we find him establishing a rule, suggested by the case of the daughters of Zelophedad, of which the object was to perpetuate the possession of landed estates within the limits of each particular tribe. "Every daughter that possesseth an inheritance shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.†

With regard to the religion of the ancient Jews, it may be

* Levit. xxiii. 24, 25.

† Numbers xxxvi. 1—10.

observed, that it contains the only complete body of law ever given to a nation at one time ; that it is the only entire body of law which has come down to our days ; that it is the only body of law which still governs an existing people ; that the tribes which it respects being scattered over the face of the whole earth, it is the only body of law which is equally observed in the four quarters of the globe ; and, finally, that all the other codes of law of which history has preserved any recollection, were delivered to communities who already had written statutes, but who wished to change their form or modify their application ; whereas, in the case of the Mosaical religion, the reader beholds a new society under the hands of a legislator who proceeds to lay its very foundations.*

These institutions retained their influence among the descendants of the people whom he led out of Egypt, till the flood of immorality which disgraced the reigns of the later kings, both of Israel and Judah, swept away all reverence for religious truth and pureness of living. Under the Judges, the condition of the Hebrews was so far favourable, that idolatry, however extensively it might be practised, was neither countenanced nor commanded by authority, and of course its pollutions never reached the tabernacle ; whereas, under the successors of Solomon, as well as of Jeroboam, the worship of idols was enjoined by the rulers of the land, and hence the pernicious influence of a foreign faith penetrated even to the sacred courts of the temple. Ahaz and Manasseh, the most unprincipled of Jewish monarchs, are denounced in Scripture for having offered their sons to Moloch ; and the former, rejecting the God of his fathers altogether, gave orders to shut up the holy edifice which had been dedicated to his name. The daily sacrifice was discontinued,

* Croxall's Scripture Politics, p. 60—85 ; Histoire des Hebreux, tome i. p. 105 ; Esprit de l'Histoire, tome i. p. 28.

and the priests retired from the altar in shame and consternation. At the court of Samaria the same impiety prevailed. Ahab, stimulated by his Sidonian queen, allowed himself to be seduced into the most atrocious crimes, and at length obtained the miserable distinction of having surpassed all others in wickedness.

In every ancient nation, the little learning of which the records have been preserved is so closely associated with religious rites, that it is extremely difficult to separate the use of letters from the worship of the gods, viewed as the benefactors and lawgivers of the human race. The oldest inscriptions in Greece, for example, were found upon the tripods which adorned the temple of Apollo at Thebes in Bœotia; one of which is said to have been presented to that local divinity by Amphitryon, a descendant of the celebrated Cadmus, to whom the Ionians are supposed to have been indebted for the introduction of the alphabetical characters.*

The literature of the Hebrews, too, appears originally in connection with their sacred books, and with the obligations of their law, municipal, moral, and ceremonial. It is vain to make any attempt with the view of determining which of the Aramean tribes, the Canaanites, the Phenicians, the Israelites, the Syrians, or the people of Chaldea, were first acquainted with the art of recording thoughts by means of written characters. A higher antiquity has indeed been claimed for the Egyptians and their remoter neighbours of

* Many writers suppose the Phenicians to be the inventors of letters. Pliny and Quintus Curtius give countenance to this opinion, and Lucan the poet has committed it to verse:—

“Phœnices primum, famæ si credimus, ausi

Mansuram rudibus vocem signare figuris.”—*Phar.* lib. iii.

The reader will find the opinions of Josephus on this subject in his first book against Apion, section second, where he traces the learning of the Greeks to the Phenicians, Chaldeans, and Egyptians.

Ethiopia; but no satisfactory evidence remains whereby the student of primeval philology might be enabled to fix the date when the language of those ingenious nations assumed a grammatical form.

It cannot be doubted that, prior to the time of Moses, there were among the Hebrews persons to whom was confided the care of preserving their genealogies, and perhaps the more interesting events which diversified their national history. In several parts of the Pentateuch, books are mentioned, as if familiar to the minds of the people; and seals are also alluded to, having names engraven upon them according to a practice very common in the east. The law, moreover, was ordered to be inscribed on stones, a fact which implies a knowledge of alphabetical writing.*

The accomplishment now mentioned was not by any means general among the people of Israel, and there is reason to believe that a large proportion of them could neither read nor handle the pen of the writer. This conclusion is rendered probable by the expedient which was found necessary for keeping alive the knowledge of the divine precepts incorporated in their moral system. "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before

* "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."—Exodus xvii. 14.

"And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys."—Numbers xxxiii. 2.

"And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly."—Deut. xxvii. 8.

all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."*

This teaching by the ear, in order that they might learn and observe to do all the words of the law, proves that the lower class of the Hebrews in those days were not taught to read. The same inference is farther strengthened by the melancholy fact, that even at Jerusalem, where the religion of Moses enjoyed its fullest splendour, the written law was allowed to sink into a gradual oblivion; insomuch, that in the days of Jehoshaphat, the fifth from David, it was found necessary to appoint a special commission of priests and Levites to revive the knowledge of its holy sanctions in all parts of the country. "And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people." At a somewhat later period, after a succession of idolatrous princes, the neglect of the Mosaical writings became still more general, till at length the very manuscript, or book of the law, which used to be read in the ears of the congregation, could nowhere be found. Josiah, famed for his piety and attention to the ceremonies of the national faith, gave orders to repair the temple for the worship of Jehovah; on which occasion Hilkiah, the high-priest, found the precious record in the house of the Lord, and sent it to the king. A momentary zeal once more bound the people to the belief and usages of their ancestors; but the example of the profane or careless sovereigns who

* Deut. xxxi. 9—13.

afterwards filled the throne of Josiah again plunged the country into guilt, obliterating all recollection of the divine statutes as a rule of life and ground of hope. It need scarcely be observed, that such an event could not have taken place had the nation at large possessed the means of perusing the institutes of their great legislator.

It has been already stated that the alphabets of the Chaldeans, Syrians, Phenicians, Arabians, Hebrews, and Samaritans, were originally the same, and were probably all derived from sensible objects, the names of which supplied the sound of the several letters. The attention which, in modern times, has been bestowed upon Egyptian hieroglyphics has at least thrown some light on the elements of written language. The term hieroglyphic, it is well known, literally signifies "sacred sculpture," and was employed by the Greeks with reference to those figures and inscriptions which they found on some very ancient temples. The practice out of which it arose appears to be common to the whole human race in the first stage of civilisation; being dictated to them by necessity, and suggested by the most obvious associations. Man learns to paint before he attempts to write; he draws the outline of a figure long before he is able to describe an event; and he confines his representations to the eye for ages, during which he cannot find any more direct means of addressing the understanding or of amusing the fancy. In the beginnings of society, indeed, all communication not strictly verbal is carried on through the medium of picture-writing; and this imperfect method continues in all countries until a happy accident or the visit of a more refined people makes known the secret of alphabetical notation. Generally speaking, this discovery so completely supersedes the more primitive usage, that in most countries all traces of the latter are forgotten; and it is only by a remote and rather indistinct species of reasoning,

that the philosophical grammarian endeavours to connect the refined literature of a polished age with the rude efforts made by the barbarian to embody his thoughts in external signs. The monuments of Egypt, a country long inhabited by the sons of Jacob, have owing to their extreme durability preserved a history, nowhere else to be obtained in so perfect a state, of the successive steps which conduct mankind from the first point to the last in the important art now under consideration.

The first and simplest expedient is that of conveying and perpetuating the knowledge of an event by forming a rude picture of it. The inconvenience inseparable from such a method soon suggests the practice of reducing the delineation, and of substituting a sword for an armed man, a flag for an invading host, and a curved line for a ship. In the earlier stages of contraction, the abbreviated forms still retain a faint resemblance to the original figure ; but in process of time, as the number of related ideas increase, the signs deviate farther from the likeness of the object, and assume more and more the character of a conventional mark, expressive of thought as well as of mere existence. At this era, however, which may be regarded as the second in order, every sign continues to be a separate word, denoting some individual thing, together with all the circumstances and associated reflections which can possibly be communicated by so imperfect a vehicle.

It is not undeserving of notice, that at the present day the language of China retains the aspect just described. Attached to old habits, or repelled from imitation by the contempt which usually attaches to ignorance, the people of that vast empire refuse to adopt the grammatical improvements of Europe, which would lead them to analyze their written speech into its alphabetical elements. Their composition, accordingly, still consists of a set of words or marks

expressive of certain ideas; becoming, of course, more complicated as the thoughts to be conveyed are more numerous or subtile, and requiring at length a great degree of very painful and unprofitable study to comprehend their full import.

The third and most important step in the progress of grammatical invention is that which provides a sign for expressing a sound instead of denoting a thing, and dissects human speech into letters instead of stopping at words. The apparatus for accomplishing this object appears to have been at first sufficiently awkward and inconvenient. In order to write the name of a man, for example, the ingenuity of the ancient philologist could suggest nothing more suitable than to arrange in a given space a certain number of objects, the *initial* letters in the *name* of which, when pronounced, would furnish the sounds required.*

After a certain period, from this modified hieroglyphic there arose a regular alphabet, constructed so as to represent and express the various sounds uttered by the human voice. This invention being subsequently communicated to the Greeks, contributed in a great measure to their improvement, and laid the foundation of their literary fame. The gift of Cadmus, who conveyed sixteen letters along the waters of the Mediterranean, is celebrated in the traditional history of the nation upon whom it was conferred; and hence the arrival of that renowned adventurer from the Syrian coast continues

* View of Ancient and Modern Egypt, p. 179. The principle mentioned in the text is illustrated by the following examples. "For instance, if a person following that scheme of notation wished to record that Pompey had landed in Egypt, he would describe the *action* by the wonted signs used in picture-writing; but, to express the *name* of the general, he would find it necessary to draw as many objects as would supply, in the initial letters of their names, the sounds, p, o, m, p, e, y. In writing the word London, according to the method of phonetic hieroglyphics, we might take the figures of a *lion*, of an *oak-tree*, of a *net*, of a *door*, of an *oval*, and of a *nail*; the initial sounds or first letters of which words would give the name of the British capital."

to be mentioned as the era when civilisation and a knowledge of the fine arts were first received by the barbarians of eastern Europe. The trading communities, which had already stationed themselves on the Phenician shore, were probably the channel of intercourse between Greece and the philosophers of Egypt and Chaldea; a supposition which will perhaps account for the similarity observed by every scholar in the more ancient forms of their several alphabets. But whatever ground there may be for this conjecture, there is no doubt that the process detected in the structure of phonetic hieroglyphics reveals the important secret which the philosophical grammarian has so long laboured to discover—the origin of alphabetical signs.

As a proof, and at the same time an illustration, of the argument now advanced, it may be enough to recal to the mind of the oriental student, that the alphabet of the Hebrew, as well as of the other cognate tongues, is in fact a list of names, and that the primitive form of the letters bore a resemblance to the objects which they were originally used to denote. Aleph, Beth, Gimel, which, in the common language of the country, meant respectively an ox, a house, a camel, were at first pictures or rude likenesses of a hut and of the two animals just specified; proceeding on the very familiar system, not yet exploded in books for children, where an ass, a bull, and a cat, are associated with the three first letters of the Roman alphabet. The process of abbreviation, however, which is rapidly applied by an improving people to all the technical properties of language, soon substituted an arbitrary sign for the complete portrait, and restricted the use of the alphabetical symbol to the representation of an elementary sound. But it is not less true, that, in the most ancient forms of the Hebrew or Samaritan letters, some resemblance may be traced to the things of which those letters were originally the names.

The use of the hieroglyph was not entirely superseded by the invention of an alphabet either among the Hebrews or Egyptians. Among the latter especially, for many purposes connected with religion and even with the more solemn occupations of civil life, the emblematical style of composition continued to enjoy a preference. There appears also to have been a mixed language, used by the priests, partaking at once of hieroglyphics and of alphabetical characters; which, in allusion to the class of men by whom it was employed, was denominated hieratic. Hence, in process of time, the subjects of Pharaoh found themselves in possession of three different modes of communication; the hieroglyphic properly so called; the hieratic; and the demotic or common. This distinction was clearly recognised by Clemens of Alexandria, who remarks, that those who are educated among the Egyptians learn first of all the method of writing called the Epistolographic; secondly, the Hieratic, which the scribes employ; and lastly, the most mysterious description, the Hieroglyphic, of which there are two kinds; the one denoting objects in a direct manner by means of the initial sounds of words; the other is symbolical. Of the symbolical signs, one class represents objects by exhibiting a likeness or picture; another by a metaphorical or less complete resemblance; and a third by means of certain allegorical enigmas. Thus, to give an example of the three methods in the symbolical division, when they wish to represent an object by the first, they fix upon a distinct resemblance; such as a circle when they want to indicate the sun, and a crescent when their purpose is to denote the moon. The second, or metaphorical, allows a considerable freedom in selecting the emblem, and may be such as only suggests the object by setting forth analogous qualities. For instance, when they record the praises of kings in their theological fables, they exhibit them in connection with

figurative allusions, which indicate their good deeds and benign dispositions. In this case the representation is not direct, but metaphorical. Of the third method of symbolical writing, the following will serve as an example: they assimilate the oblique course of the planets to the body of a serpent, but that of the sun to the figure of a scarabæus.*

In this extract from the christian father there is mention made of that species of hieroglyphics, the phonetic, which express objects by means of the *initial letters*; a remark now perfectly intelligible, but which a few years ago presented a most perplexing inquiry to the ablest scholars in Europe. The ox, house, and camel of the Hebrew alphabet, fell originally under the head of phonetic hieroglyphics; the picture of the objects was at length withdrawn, and there remained only the initial letters of their names, *Aleph, Beth, Gimel*.

As Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, it may be presumed that he communicated to the chosen people all those branches of science and art which might be found suitable to their condition as an agricultural colony. Accordingly, the most ancient writers of profane history, Jewish as well as Christian, take pleasure in magnifying the acquirements of the Hebrew legislator. Clemens relates, that he was taught, by the wise men, arithmetic, geometry, music, medicine, and, above all, that rare philosophy embodied in their hieroglyphics, the knowledge of which is conveyed by means of symbols or signs. Philo farther maintains, that, being educated with a due regard to his adopted rank as a member of the royal family, certain Greeks were employed to instruct him in a course of learn-

* Clementis Alexandrini Stromatum, lib. v. p. 555. Edit. 1688.
Αυτίκα, ὅτι παρ' Αἰγυπτίους παιδεύονται, πρῶτον μὲν πάντων τὴν Αἰγυπτίων γραμμάτων μέθοδον ἐκμανθάνουσι, τὴν ἐπιστολογραφικὴν καλουμένην· δεύτεραν δὲ, τὴν ἰσραήλικην, ἣν χρωσθῆναι οἱ ἱερογγραμμάταις· ὅσῳ τὴν δὲ καὶ τιλιεῖταιαν, τὴν ἱερογλυφικὴν.

ing different from any which were professed by the native sages; though it is admitted that he derived from the Egyptians an acquaintance with letters, and from the Chaldeans the science of astronomy. Eupolemus, too, in his book on the kings of Judah, states that Moses was the earliest philosopher among the Israelites, and also that he had the merit of initiating his countrymen in the elements of literature. He was the first who taught them grammar; an accomplishment, he adds, which the Phenicians received from the Jews, and the Greeks from the Phenicians.*

The Hebrews, though under the direction of a more immediate Providence, did not disdain to profit by the wisdom which their inspired leader brought from the land of his birth. Even of hieroglyphics some traces may be discovered in the furniture of the tabernacle and the temple, and more especially in those mystic visions which were revealed to the prophet Ezekiel and to the author of the Apocalypse. In other respects, too, where the doctrines of the true faith were not involved, the principle of imitation seems to have carried the children of Jacob to the adoption of similar practices. The learned bishop of Alexandria informs his readers, that in Egypt every individual cultivated some branch of philosophy; an arrangement which applied chiefly to their holy ceremonies. In their pious processions, for example, the singer goes before, carrying in his hand an instrument of music. He is said to be obliged to learn two of the books of Hermes; one of which contains hymns addressed to the gods, and the other the rules by which a prince ought to govern. Next comes the hieroscopus, holding a clock and the

* Clem. Alexandrin. Strom. lib. i. p. 345. Some of the ancient writers here referred to, not satisfied with ascribing to Moses all the learning and philosophy of his age, represent him also a conjurer or enchanter. For example, they maintain that he killed by a single word the Egyptian who had assailed the Hebrew slave, as it is recorded, Exod. ii. 11, 12.

branch of a palm-tree, which are the symbols of astrology. He must be completely master of the four books of Hermes, which treat of that science. One of these explains the order of the fixed stars; the second the motions and phases of the sun and moon; the other two determine the times of their periodical rising. Then follows the hierogrammist, or sacred scribe, with two feathers on his head, and a book and ruler in his hand, to which are added the instruments of writing, some ink, and a reed. He must know what are called hieroglyphics, and those branches of science which belong to cosmography, geography, and astronomy, especially the laws of the sun, and moon, and the five planets: he must be farther acquainted with the territorial distribution of Egypt, the course of the Nile, the furniture of the temples, and of all consecrated places. After these is an officer denominated Stolistes, who bears a square-rule, as the emblem of justice, and the cup for libations. His charge includes every thing which belongs to the education of youth, as well as to sacrifices, first-fruits, selection of cattle, hymns, prayers, religious pomps, festivals, and commemorations. This functionary is succeeded by one called the prophet, who displays in his bosom a jar or vessel meant for carrying water; a symbol thought to represent the Deity, but which more probably had a reference to the sacred character of the Nile. He is attended by persons bearing bread cut into slices. The duty of the prophet made it necessary for him to be well acquainted with the ten books called Sacerdotal, and which treat of the laws of the gods and the whole discipline of the priesthood. He also presides over the distribution of the sacred revenue; that is, the income arising from the performance of pious rites, and dedicated to the support of religious institutions. The inferior priests direct their attention to such of the works of Hermer as belong to anatomy, to nosology, to pharmacy, to instru-

ments of surgery, to diseases of the eye, and the maladies incident to the female sex.*

It is the opinion of some able authors, that Moses was influenced by considerations of utility, founded upon his experience in Egypt, when he made the learned professions hereditary in one tribe, the descendants of Levi. At first sight it might appear that this institution rested on a basis altogether spiritual; but, upon suitable inquiry, it will be found, as has been already mentioned, that the Levitical offices comprehended a great variety of avocations much more closely connected with secular life than with the ministry of the tabernacle, or with the services due to their brethren of the priesthood. They supplied, in fact, to the whole nation of the Israelites, their judges, lawyers, scribes, teachers, and physicians.†

In the first chapter of the book of Numbers a command is issued, by the authority of Heaven, to separate this tribe from the others, and not to enrol its members among those who were to engage in war. On similar grounds it was determined that they should not have lands assigned to them, but trust for their maintenance to a certain portion of the produce derived by the labour of their kinsmen from the field and the vineyard. In short, as their occupations were incompatible with the pursuits of agriculture or the feeding of cattle, it was deemed expedient that they should be relieved from such cares, and devote their whole attention to the service of the altar and the instruction of the people.

To accomplish the benevolent objects comprehended in this arrangement, the Levites were placed in certain towns throughout all the tribes, where schools might be formed and records preserved. In this way, there was not only secured a competent knowledge of the Mosaical law, includ-

* Clem. Alexandrin. Strom. lib. vi. p. 633.

† Volume i. p. 235.

ing both its civil and spiritual sanctions, but a foundation was also laid for all those literary attainments which might be deemed necessary either for the discharge of professional duties or for the ornament of private life. An examination of the scanty remains of that remote period will justify to a considerable extent the conjecture now made. It will appear that the poetry, the ethics, the oratory, the music, and even the physical science cultivated in the times of Samuel, David, and Solomon, bore a close relation to the original object of the Levitical colleges, and were meant to promote the principles of religion and morality, no less than of that singular patriotism which made the Hebrew delight in his separation from all the other nations of the earth.

At a later period, on the seminaries founded by the sons of Levi were engrafted the schools of the Prophets. These were establishments obviously intended to prepare young men for certain offices analogous to those which in the christian church are discharged by the different orders of the clergy; maintained in some degree at the public expense; and placed under the superintendence of persons who were distinguished by their gravity or high endowments. The principal studies in these convents, as has already been suggested, appear to have been poetry and music, the elements of which were necessary to the young prophet when he was called to take a part in the worship of Jehovah. In the first book of Samuel, the pupils are represented as performing on psalteries, tabrets, and harps; and in the Chronicles it is said that the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, prophesied with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals. Of the fruits of their professional study we have fine examples in the Psalms and Proverbs; the former a collection of sacred lyrics composed for the worship of Jehovah; the latter a compend of practical wisdom suggested by an enlightened experience, confirmed by the authority of inspira-

tion, and expressed in language equally remarkable for its divine truth and rare simplicity.

In early times the dictates of moral philosophy are pronounced in short sentences, the result of much thought, and of which the effect is usually heightened by the introduction of a judicious antithesis, both in the sentiment and the language. The sayings ascribed to the wise men of Greece, whose era did not differ much from that of Solomon, belong to the same kind of composition; being extremely valuable to a rude people who can profit by the fruits of reasoning without being able to attend to its forms, and deposit in their minds a useful precept unencumbered with the arguments by which its soundness might be proved. The books which bear the name of the Son of David are distinguished above all others for the sage views they exhibit of human life, and for the sensible maxims they address to all conditions of men who have to encounter its manifold perils; proving, as they were intended, a guide unto the feet and a lamp unto the path. ●

It is recorded in the First Book of the Kings that Solomon spake three thousand proverbs, and that his songs or sacred hymns were a thousand and five. Of these a small portion only has descended for the instruction of posterity; the greater part both of his apothegms and his lyrics having perished during the evil days which fell upon his successors, and under the long captivity wherein they terminated. The study of natural history, too, which appears to have occupied a large share of his time, agrees well with the progress which the men of his age must have attained in the knowledge of plants and animals. The thoughtful mind is led to delineate and describe, long before it can arrange into classes, genera, and species, the varied objects which invite the eye or please the ear. It is to be regretted that the labours of the wise king in the departments of botany and zoology have

not come down to us ; though there is reason to apprehend that they would have proved, like those of the earliest Greek philosophers, more valuable for the collection of a few facts than for the development of any intelligible principle.*

In Judea, as well as in other countries less highly favoured, there may be detected that weakness of the learned which shows itself in the desire to throw around the mystery of their wisdom the veil of dark words. Philosophy in her first steps usually assumes the garb of enigma, and, in revealing her interpretations of nature, delights to employ the medium of fable. The excellence of the Hebrew monarch as a framer and expounder of riddles is celebrated in the Scriptures, where we are told that “when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove him with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones ; and, when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions : and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not.”†

Josephus enters into details much more minutely, and relates, besides, that the kings of Israel and of Tyre were accustomed to exercise their ingenuity on such subjects. Relying on the authority of Diodorus the historian, he says, that Solomon sent riddles to Hiram, and desired to receive the like in return ; stipulating, that he who could not solve the questions addressed to him should pay a sum of money to the other. He adds, that Hiram accepted the conditions, but that, as he was not able to expound the mysteries proposed by the Jewish sovereign, he incurred the payment of large forfeits. At length, procuring the aid of a Tyrian youth, whose name was Abdemon, he conquered all the

* 1 Kings iv. 32, 33.

† 2 Chronicles ix. 1, 2.

scientific difficulties transmitted to him from Jerusalem, solved the most intricate problems, and, to compensate his losses, drew from the treasury of his rival considerable sums as penalties on ignorance.*

Such trials of strength were not confined to the courts of Tyre and Judea. They are characteristic of that period when men are so far advanced in the study of the varied phenomena by which they are surrounded as to have arrived at general results, and to have acquired the art of expressing a moral truth through the medium of physical allusions. Hence, such enigmas or veiled doctrines became a regular subject of investigation. It was the part of the wise among the Hebrews “to hear, and increase learning;” and the great inducement to patient research in such circumstances was expressed in these words: “A man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels; to understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.”†

The literature of the Hebrews underwent a considerable change during their residence in the Babylonian territory; and their less restricted intercourse with foreign nations afterwards introduced them to an acquaintance with the Grecian philosophy, of which many traces appear in the Book of Wisdom, and in the writings of the son of Sirach. But the circumstance most worthy of notice is the loss of their native tongue while they sojourned among strangers; and hence the language in which their sacred scriptures were composed was no longer understood by the common people. From this remarkable incident in their history arose the necessity of an interpreter whenever the Law was read for the instruction of the assembled nation, more especially on the Sabbatical year, when the whole institutes of Moses were explained

* Antiq. Jud. lib. v. c. 5.

† Proverbs i. 5, 6.

to the surviving tribes. The same assistance became necessary in the synagogues, in order to make the faithful comprehend the several portions of holy writ which were pronounced in their hearing, selected from the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the Prophets. The interpreters learned the Hebrew language at schools established throughout the land for the purpose ; but the teachers in these seminaries, not always satisfied with a simple interpretation of the original idiom, were chargeable with a strong desire to modify their expositions so as to render them conformable to the prevailing tenets of philosophy. From this source arose contentions, which, in process of time, afforded occasion to the sects of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, to assume a permanent ground of distinction in the bosom of the Jewish church.

Towards the commencement of the christian era, the learned among the Hebrews were known by the name of writers or scribes ; a distinction which was probably derived from their office as genealogists, historians, and commentators. In imitation of the Greeks, they had their Seven wise men, of whom Gamaliel, celebrated for his good sense and moderation, was one. They called themselves the children of wisdom, an expression which coincides in its import with the term philosopher among their pagan neighbours ; the heads of sects were denominated Fathers ; and their pupils were known as their children or sons. This language pervades a large portion of both Testaments ; and has, in a form somewhat accommodated to modern notions, been transmitted to our own days.

For a long time in all countries the jealousy of learning is much more remarkable than its success in throwing light upon the things which mankind are most desirous to know. Among the old nations of the East especially, knowledge was restricted to one class as a labour or as a distinction ; and,

being held as a strictly professional endowment, or in some cases as a hereditary privilege, no one else thought himself entitled to intrude into its mysteries. A similar remark will apply to the Druids, those priests and teachers of the early inhabitants of Western Europe. On account of the high reputation enjoyed by this order of men, great numbers flocked to them with the view of being instructed in their discipline, and continued under their charge no fewer than twenty years. But they thought it not lawful to commit to letters the profound truths which they professed to communicate; a resolution which they are supposed to have adopted for two reasons: first, because they wished that their science should not be made known to the vulgar; and, secondly, to prevent their pupils from neglecting the faculty of memory by trusting too much to the resources of writing. So far from extending the benefits of instruction to the people at large, they purposely concealed their treasures; and lest the poor and the ignorant should ever attempt to read, they had resolved never to write. They held the key of knowledge in their hands; but rather than permit the vulgar to enter into its sacred dwelling, they threw it away, and have thereby deprived all future generations of the accumulated learning, or at least the opinions and traditions of many ages, the darkness that has fallen upon which can no longer be successfully removed.

The reputation of these men had reached the ears of several authors among the Greeks and Romans, especially of Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Diogenes Laertius; the last of whom places them in the same rank in point of philosophical attainment with the Chaldeans of Assyria, the Magi of Persia, and the Brahmins and Gymnosophists of India. Their studies appear to have been chiefly directed to the mechanism of the solar system; the number, distance, revolutions, and comparative magnitude

of the several bodies which compose it ; and, above all, to the influence which the planets were supposed to exercise on the health, the fortunes, and the destiny of mankind.

The notions entertained by the Druids were evidently those of Pythagoras and the older sages of the East. Were we to penetrate more deeply, we might perhaps discover the elements of other systems which had previously fallen to pieces through age, or been scattered by violence ; theories as to the origin of things which were entertained by the philosophers of Arabia and Egypt. For example, they taught, concerning the universe, that it was never to be entirely destroyed or annihilated, but was to undergo a succession of great changes and revolutions, which were to be produced at one time by the ascendancy of water, and at another by that of fire. This opinion, as Strabo remarks, was not peculiar to the Druids, but was held by them in common with other sects in different nations. Cicero, for instance, speaks of it as a truth universally acknowledged and undeniable ; adding that it is impossible for mankind to attain a glory which is eternal, or even of very long duration, on account of those deluges and conflagrations of the earth which must necessarily happen at certain periods.*

This opinion, which was entertained by the most ancient philosophers, in different countries and at great distances of time and place from one another, was not, it is probable, the result of a minute examination of the earth's surface, or a doctrine founded on pure tradition from inquirers older than themselves ; but was, it is more likely, communicated through various corrupted channels from their common ancestors, the family of Noah. The agreement of the Druids with the learned men of so many other nations in this opinion about the alternate dissolution and renovation of the

* Cicero de Natura Deorum, lib. ii. c. 46.

world,' gives reason to conclude that they agreed with them also in the doctrine as to its origin from two distinct principles; the one intelligent and omnipotent, which was God; the other inanimate and inactive, which was matter. But whether they believed with some in those ancient times that matter was eternal, or with others that it was created, and in what manner they endeavoured to account for its disposition or arrangement into the present form of the universe, we are entirely ignorant, though there is no doubt that they were wont to speculate on these interesting subjects.

In the days of David and Solomon there was no philosophy to which the people at large might not have access; and though wisdom was sometimes shrouded in a robe of mystery, the intention was rather to invite than to repel. Among the Hebrews at that period there was no literary sectarianism, no transcendental doctrines. There was no profane vulgar in the chosen people, for the stores of divine knowledge were open to all alike. The descendant of Jacob beheld in every member of his tribe a brother and not a master; one who, in all the respects which give to man dignity and self-esteem, was his equal in the strictest sense of the term. Hence the noble flame of patriotism which glowed in all their institutions, before the people became corrupted by idolatry and a too frequent intercourse with the surrounding tribes; and hence, too, the still more noble spirit of fraternal affection which breathed in their ancient law, their devotional writers, and their prophets.

In no respect, indeed, does the Hebrew nation appear to greater advantage than when viewed in the light of their sublime compositions. Nor is this remark confined simply to the style or mechanism of their writings, which is nevertheless allowed by the best judges to possess many merits; but may be extended more especially to the exalted nature

of their subjects,—the works, the attributes, and the purposes of Jehovah. The poets of pagan antiquity, on the other hand, excite by their descriptions of divine things a deep feeling of ridicule or disgust. Even the most elegant of Greek and Roman authors exhibit repulsive images of their gods, and suggest the grossest ideas in connection with the principles and enjoyments which prevail among the inhabitants of their Olympus. But the contemporaries of David, inferior in many things to the ingenious people who listened to the strains of Homer and Virgil, are nevertheless remarkable for their elevated conceptions of the Supreme Being as the creator and governor of the world, as well as for the suitable terms in which they give utterance to their exalted thoughts.

The eulogy now pronounced applies to the simple and unsophisticated age to which the history of that king and of his immediate successor invites our attention. At a later period, when both Israel and Judah were plunged in corruption, the hearts of the multitude waxed gross, their ears became dull of hearing, and in many cases they understood not the import of their own sacred word. As time rolled on, learning assumed still greater complexity, and the pure stream of knowledge was at once darkened and polluted by the dregs of science falsely so called. The proud rabbi and the self-sufficient scribe, who neglected the lower orders, were heard to exclaim with the bitterest scorn, “ This people which know not the law are accursed !”

It would be unjust to limit the estimate of Hebrew literature to the few compositions, historical, poetical, and prophetic, which through Divine Providence have escaped the accidents of time and the violence of conquest. Even as early as the age of Moses a reference is made to works in which some of the **more** striking events related in the Pentateuch appear to have been duly recorded. “ The book of the wars of the Lord” is mentioned in the twenty-first

chapter of Numbers as an authority for certain occurrences which took place at the Red sea and among the brooks of Arnon. The "book of Jasher" is also cited for the purpose of confirming the narrative in the tenth chapter of Joshua, where the miraculous victory of the Israelites is celebrated by the inspired writer. An allusion is made to the same chronicle in the first chapter of the second book of Samuel; while as to "the acts of David the king, first and last," we are assured that "they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries." With regard, again, to the exploits of Solomon, it is asked, "are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam, the son of Nebat?"* Reference is likewise made to a species of annals, different perhaps from any of those already specified, entitled the "Acts of Solomon;" in which, it is said, there is an account given of the principal transactions that fell out during his reign. The hostilities, too, which, upon the separation of the kingdoms, ensued between Rehoboam and the usurper of the throne of Israel, are depicted in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and in that which Iddo the seer compiled "concerning genealogies." There was, moreover, a "book of Jehu, the son of Henani," the object of which was to preserve the memory of Jehoshaphat, and such of his doings as are not described in the pages of the Old Testament.

During the reigns of the first Hebrew princes, when the cultivation of literature was recommended by patrons so enlightened and munificent, it may be presumed that many

* 1 Chronicles xxix. 29. 2 Chronicles ix. 29; xii. 15; xx. 34.

treatises appeared of which the names have entirely perished. Even of the thousand and five songs composed by Solomon, we in vain endeavour to trace the remains or to account for the loss ; and it may be asserted that the age which could produce the Psalms, Proverbs, Canticles, and Ecclesiastes, must have given birth to numerous hymns, pastorals, and moral apologues, the works of less distinguished authors, whose reputation no annalist has embalmed.

Having mentioned the schools of the prophets as one of the institutions which sprung from the Levitical colleges, it may not be unseasonable to make a few remarks on the prophetic character itself, viewed in the several offices attached to it at successive periods of the Hebrew economy.*

* “ When these schools of the Prophets were at first instituted is nowhere indicated in Scripture ; but as the first mention we find of them is in Samuel’s time, we can hardly suppose that they were founded at a much earlier period. It may be presumed, therefore, that the sad degeneracy of the priesthood at first occasioned the institution of these places for the better education of those who were to succeed in the sacred ministry whether as prophets or priests. According to the notices given in Scripture (1 Samuel x. 5—10 ; xix. 20. 2 Kings ii. 5 ; iv. 38 ; xxii. 14) they were first erected in the cities of the Levites, which, for the more convenient instruction of the people, were dispersed throughout the several tribes of Israel. In these places the Prophets had convenient colleges built (whereof Naioth seems to be one) for their abode ; and, living in communities, had some one of distinguished note set over them to be their head or president. Here it was that they studied the law, and learned to expound the several precepts of it. Here it was that by previous exercise they qualified themselves for the reception of the spirit of prophecy, whenever it should please God to send it upon them. Here it was that they were instructed in the sacred art of psalmody, or, as the Scripture (1 Chronicles xxv. 1—7) calls it, prophesying with harps, with psalteries, and cymbals ; and hence it was, when any blessings were to be promised, judgments denounced, or extraordinary events predicted, that the messengers were generally chosen ; so that these colleges were seminaries of divine knowledge, and nurseries of the race of the prophets which succeeded from Samuel to the time of Malachi.”—*Starkhouse’s History of the Bible. Stillingfleet’s Origines Sacra. Wheatley on the Schools of the Prophets. Allingius de Repub. Hebræorum.*

We read of Schools of the Prophets at Naioth, Gilgal, Jericho, and Bethel ; where, by the way, says Bishop Bull, we may observe, “ that those prophetic colleges were usually erected in remoter and higher places, on hills distant from towns and cities, as the fittest and most commodious places for a studious contemplative life.”—*Sermons*, vol. i. p. 258 ; edit. 1816.

In the primitive acceptation of the word, prophecy denoted any species of intellectual exertion directed towards the service of God or the advancement of religious knowledge. Miriam, the sister of Moses, for example, was said to be a prophetess, because she led the females of the Israelitish camp, when they went out with timbrels and dances to chant their song of triumph over the vanquished Egyptians on the shores of the Red sea. It has been already noticed that the sons of the prophets at Ramah were described as prophesying when they performed, on their psalteries, tabrets, and harps, an accompaniment to the holy anthems prepared for divine worship. In the same sense, every woman who took part in the praises or supplications of the christian church was regarded, in the days of St Paul, as discharging the duty of a prophetess ; and it is recommended that while so employed she ought, according to the practice of eastern nations, to have her face concealed in a veil. Nay, the great apostle just named, extending the use of the phrase to its utmost limits, applies the title of prophet to those persons among the heathen who composed or chanted songs in praise of their imaginary gods.

On a particular occasion he alludes to the people of Crete in these words : “ One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars.” And every classical scholar is perfectly aware, that, in the language of pagan antiquity, a poet and a prophet were synonymous appellations. Nay, the priests of Baal, when they stood by their idolatrous altar as the rivals of Elisha, calling upon Baal from the rising of the sun until his rays became faint in the west, were said to “ prophesy until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice ;” and this expression, it must be manifest from what has been already stated, was applied to them because they addressed the ears of their

imaginary god by means of the psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music.*

But the function of the prophet was not confined to praise and thanksgiving; it also implied the ability to expound and enforce the Mosaical law. He was entitled to exhort and entreat; and it will accordingly be found that the greater part of the prophetic writings in the Old Testament consist of remonstrances, rebukes, threatenings, and expostulations. In order to be a prophet, in the Hebrew sense of the expression, it was not necessary to be endowed with the power of foreseeing future events. On the contrary, in the later times of the Jewish commonwealth, the peculiar gift in question was most generally restricted to the elucidation and enforcement of divine truth; an import of the term which was extended into the era of the New Testament, when the more recondite sense of the phrase was almost entirely laid aside. Using the word in this sense, St Paul remarks, that “ he who prophesieth speaketh unto men for edification, exhortation, and comfort.”

In those days any high literary qualification or distinguished endowment of genius was held akin to the prophetic gift. An obscure idea of inspiration pervades the popular language of all nations, as applicable to the more splendid productions of the imagination, and even of the intellectual powers. The ancients were quite familiar with the belief that supernatural intelligences, though beings of an inferior order in the hierarchy of spirits, were wont to lend their aid to the human faculties; giving them not only a clear view of the relations of things in the moral world, but also great practical skill in secular professions. He who rose to eminence in such pursuits was said to have an “ excellent spirit

* Epistle of Paul to Titus i. 12. 1 Kings xviii. 27.

within him," and was regarded by all as enjoying the countenance of some one of those gracious ministers of perfection who delight in the improvement of mind and in the progress of the beneficial arts. In modern times, when no spiritual influence is recognised but that which proceeds from the most sacred source, the figurative language of those earlier days has generally fallen into disuse ; and the knowledge or ability which men display in the exposition of Holy Writ—the prophesying of the primitive church—is ascribed to diligent study and a favourable combination of mental habits.

It is well said by the learned Bishop Bull, that “ even the divinely-inspired persons and ministers of God did not so wholly depend upon divine inspiration but that they made use of the ordinary helps and means, such as reading of books, with study and meditation on them, for their assistance in the discharge of their office. I add, that the holy prophets under the Old Testament took the same course, not depending so wholly upon immediate revelation and inspiration from God as to think all endeavour and diligence on their own part needless ; but, on the contrary, taking pains to be prophets, being for a long time educated in societies and schools of that divine learning, under a constant discipline and exercise for the attaining of the gift of prophecy, and, when they had attained it, still using a proportionable diligence for the maintenance, preservation, and increase of it. For we read of colleges and incorporated societies, consisting of prophets and their sons, or of prophets and their scholars and disciples, the one receiving instruction from the other, just as it is in the colleges of our universities. The business of these colleges of the prophets is by learned men described to be this : they were taught by their presidents the law of God ; they were instructed in the prophecies of those prophets who went before them ; they were taught by what ways and means they might attain the

gift of prophecy, or the increase of it ; they were taught what was the scope and signification of the sacrifices and ceremonial laws by which the things that were to come to pass in the time of the Messias were prefigured ; and, in a word, they were in those colleges taught the whole mystery of the Jewish religion, according to the time and age and their several capacities. So that even prophecy was a science among the ancient Jews, and men were trained up to it by discipline and education.”*

As a proof and example of the statement now made, the reader is referred to Daniel, who holds a high place among the most excellent of the prophets, and who was not ashamed to confess that he had learned somewhat by reading the predictions of one of his predecessors. “ I, Daniel, understood by books the number of years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet.” This fact, incidentally mentioned, will serve to confirm the remark made by the judicious prelate whose opinions are now quoted, that the pupils in the several prophetic colleges were employed in studying the works of those gifted men to whom the word of the Lord came, or by whose labours the field of learning had been extended. If so accomplished a prophet as Daniel made use of the books of the preceding prophets, we may be sure that those young novices in the study of prophecy were taught by their masters diligently to peruse them.†

* Some important points of Primitive Christianity maintained and defended, in several Sermons and other Discourses. By George Bull, D.D., Bishop of St David's, vol. i. p. 258.

† “ We read not of these schools of the prophets, which were societies in order to spiritual instruction, till about the time of Samuel ; and many think him to have been the author of them. For it is evident that about his time the priesthood was grown to a great degeneracy ; and men thereby estranged from the worship of God, so that there seemed almost a necessity then for restoring some societies which might have a special eye to the spiritual part of God's worship and service. The occasion of the institution of them seems to have been from the resort which the people had to the high places for sacrificing, during the captivity or uncertain abode of the ark of God after the desolation of Shiloh : now the people resorting to these places to

But, besides the accomplishment of music to fit the ordinary prophet for the service of the temple, and the acquisition of theological knowledge to qualify him for expounding the Scriptures, there remains to be considered that more rare and important endowment, conferred by the Divine Spirit, which enabled the holy seer to look into the perspective of the future, and reveal to his own as well as to subsequent generations the purposes of God relative to the fortunes of the human race.

It may be stated, in the first place, that those who were called to discharge the higher duties of the prophetic office, as well as the inferior order of ministers, were usually selected from the schools established, as has been supposed, under the auspices of Samuel. This conclusion appears to derive some countenance from the surprise expressed by those who witnessed the pious exercises of Saul when he joined the sacred minstrels who met him between Bethel and Gilgal. "And it came to pass, when all that knew him before beheld him prophesying among the prophets, they said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish?" They knew that he had not been regularly trained, and were therefore astonished at the part he now acted, and which he was thought perhaps to have assumed without due authority. "Who is their father," exclaimed one; who is their president or head, that such irregularities should be permitted?

The discipline of these schools was considered as a proper preparation for the attainment of that precious unction which rendered the human faculties, in a few chosen individuals, the medium of conveying to the ears of the faithful the decrees of Divine Providence. Knowledge and piety were considered

perform their solemnities, it was so ordered that a company of prophets should be there resident to *bless the sacrifices* and instruct the people."—*Origines Sacre*, book ii. chap. iv. p. 154; edit. 1675.

indispensable qualifications, to which were added a good natural disposition, and a well-regulated seclusion from the world. Above all, the mind must be cheerful, and free from the oppression of such weighty cares as would attach its thoughts to the earth. Even an occasional anxiety, if allowed to go beyond bounds, precluded the approach of the Good Spirit, which, according to the belief of the Hebrews, never entered a melancholy heart. To prove the soundness of this opinion, they were wont to adduce the case of Elisha, as mentioned in the third chapter of the Second Book of the Kings. When Jehoram and Jehoshaphat, with the prince of Edom, applied to him in their distress during an expedition against Moab, he replied in all the bitterness of offended zeal, and said to the king of Israel, "What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father and the prophets of thy mother." The son of Ahab endeavoured to sooth him, but in vain. "And Elisha said, As the Lord of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee nor see thee. But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him." The irritated seer yielded to the influence of the sweet sounds, and immediately proceeded to point out the means whereby the combined sovereigns might supply their hosts with water.

In a country where the prophetic spirit was one of the means whereby the truths of religion and instruction in righteousness were conveyed, it became necessary to supply the people with rules for determining whether every one who spake in the name of heaven had received a divine commission. Moses, who assured the Israelites that a succession of holy men would be raised up in their several generations to enlighten their path in the knowledge of God's will, supplied

them with one infallible criterion for avoiding error, even in the perplexing case of an impostor, who, while he could foretell future events, might labour to withdraw them from the faith. If the seducing prophet should attempt to undermine any of the established principles of the law communicated by the Almighty for the guidance of the elect nation, and labour to withdraw them from their allegiance to Jehovah to the worship of other gods, the accomplishment of his predictions was to be wholly disregarded. No sign from Heaven, however impressive and convincing, could be regarded as a warrant for the slightest deviation into idolatrous practices. Limits were therefore imposed on the exercise of this supernatural gift; there was a boundary fixed, beyond which its energies were to be viewed with suspicion; a zone was delineated, on either side of which its brightest light was to be denounced as the most deceitful darkness.*

It will accordingly be found that all the threatenings and promises which proceeded from the mouths of the prophets prior to the Babylonian captivity, were restricted to the conditions of the Mosaical covenant, and did not so much assert the approach of actual events as the infliction of contingent punishment and the bestowal of contingent blessings. The result in either case was not to be considered as an unalterable decree of Heaven, but as depending upon re-

* Deut. xiii. 1—12; xviii. 19—22. Origen undertakes to show the necessity of the prophetic office among the Jews, on the ground of its keeping them from hearkening to the diviners of other nations. "It being written in their law, that the Gentiles hearkened unto oracles and divinations, but that God would not suffer it to be so among them, it presently follows, a prophet shall the Lord God raise up in the midst of them, &c. Therefore, when the nations round about had their oracles and several ways of divination, all which were strictly prohibited among the Jews; if the Jews had no way of foreknowing things to come, it had been almost impossible, considering the great curiosity of human nature, to have kept them from despising the law of Moses, or apostatizing to the heathen oracles, or setting up something like them among themselves."—*Contra Celsum*, lib. i. p. 28; edit. 1658. *Stillingfleet's Origines Sacre*, book ii. chap. iv. p. 151.

penitance on the one hand, or an obstinate continuance in sin on the other ; a principle which was clearly illustrated in the history of Jeremiah, whose duty on many occasions called him to denounce evil against the inhabitants of Judea. By prophesying against the temple, he gave great offence to his brethren, and also the priests, who forthwith accused him as a traitor to the independence of his country, and a concealed foe to the national religion. When brought before the princes and the people, assembled to hear his defence, he spake as follows : “ The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house, and against this city, all the words that ye have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God ; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.”*

In such instances the denunciations of a prophet ought to have been regarded as nothing more than preaching the judgments of God, necessarily implied in the terms of the covenant by which the Israelites possessed the land of Canaan, and only to be averted by a speedy return to the obedience of the Divine law. It was on this ground that the judges pronounced Jeremiah blameless. They called to mind that similar predictions had been uttered by prophets in former reigns and that no evil had actually come to pass, because in those cases the sovereign, warned of the dreadful penalties suspended over his subjects, besought Jehovah and obtained a remission. It is obvious, therefore, that when Jonah, Ezekiel, and the intrepid son of Hilkiah lifted

* Jeremiah xxvi. 12, 13.—On this occasion a reference is made to the general principle stated in chapter xviii. 7—10. “ At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it : if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it : if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.”

up their voices to a sinful nation and made known the terrors of the Lord, they knew not certainly the issue of their own labours ; whether repentance would stay the omnipotent hand and return the sword to its sheath, or whether the hard and impenitent hearts of those whom they addressed would bring down all the vials of wrath upon their devoted heads.

No advantage would attend any such inquiry as might have for its object to determine the extent to which the Prophets, as instruments of the Divine Spirit, were acquainted with the import of the words they were taught to pronounce. For example, it can never be known how far the intellectual vision of Isaiah was carried beyond his own times, and in what light the glorious scenery of the gospel, so vividly portrayed to his imagination, appeared to the eye of his faith. In the telescope through which he was allowed to penetrate the remote future, he probably perceived but the shadows of the objects brought within the range of his human sight ; and when employed in describing their vast magnitude and brilliant colours, “ he spake as he was moved,” without perhaps having the power to unfold his own prophecy by means of a “ private interpretation.” He contemplated Christianity through a Jewish medium ; he saw salvation and a mighty deliverance rising on the verge of the distant sky ; he beheld a forerunner preparing the way ; the mountains stooping, and the valleys raising their level ; the crooked paths becoming straight, and the rough places plain ; but the immediate consummation to which his hopes and wishes were attached, was undoubtedly the return of his countrymen to their holy inheritance in the land promised to their fathers.

Before leaving this subject, it may not be inexpedient to make a few remarks on one of the methods adopted by the ancient prophets for impressing divine truths or solemn admonitions on the mind of the people whom they were

commissioned to teach. In the twentieth chapter of Isaiah it is related that this holy man was commanded to loose the sackcloth from off his loins, and his shoes from his feet ; and it is added, “ Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia ; so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot.”

In like manner Jeremiah relates that, after procuring a linen girdle, the word of the Lord came to him, “ saying, Take the girdle that thou hast got, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock.” He obeyed this injunction ; and, after the lapse of some time, when he was commanded to bring it back, he found it injured by the usual operation of the earth or atmosphere. “ Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it ; and, behold, the girdle was marred ; it was profitable for nothing. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem. This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.”*

The mimic siege of Jerusalem, too, which Ezekiel was commanded to accomplish, is another example of the same mode of revealing an important fact. He was instructed to portray the city on a tile, and to build a fort against it, and to cast a mount against it, and to set battering-rams against it round about. He was also desired to lie upon his left side three hundred and ninety days, and upon his right side forty days, to represent the several periods during which the houses of Israel and Judah were doomed to bear their ini-

* Jeremiah xlii. 3—10.

quity. “And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege.”*

There are in the writings of the same prophet many similar types, visions, and parables, described as actions performed or ceremonies observed by himself; all of them delineated with that powerful pencil which marks the repulsive pictures wherein it was his duty to exhibit the corruptions of his people. But those figurative doings, although in some cases grotesque and apparently undignified, did not imply any breach of decorum nor contempt for the rules of virtue. In this respect his typical proceedings differed from those ascribed to Hosea, who, in order to illustrate the defection of the Hebrew tribes, and their propensity to idolatrous worship, introduces an account of his connection with a licentious woman. “And the Lord said to Hosea, Go take unto thee a wife of whoredoms, and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord.”

A question has arisen among commentators as to the nature of those prophetic descriptions; whether they apply to actions really performed, or merely to emblematical visions. As they are said to be “signs” unto the people, the Jewish expounders were in general disposed to interpret them literally; and their views on this point were adopted by several of the more ancient christian writers. But modern divines are nearly unanimous in preferring the figurative import of the sacred text, and in considering it as entirely referable to an allegorical manner of teaching, wherein actions were employed instead of words. They maintain, that several of the things said to be done are extremely improbable, and others hardly within the bounds of possibility. For example, it is very unlikely that Isaiah should walk

* Ezekiel, iv, 1—6.

three years naked and barefooted, for a sign and wonder upon the distant lands of Egypt and Ethiopia, even if nothing more should be meant than that he laid aside his upper garment: or that Jeremiah should send yokes to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Sidon; or that he should take a journey of five hundred miles, from Jerusalem to the Euphrates, to hide his girdle in a rock, and, after it was rotted, to walk the same distance to bring it back again; or, finally, that he should literally receive a wine-cup from God, and carry it to all the kings of the earth far and near, one with another, and to all the kingdoms of the world. Nor is it more probable that Ezekiel should actually eat a roll of parchment, or lie upon his left side three hundred and ninety days together, with bands upon him, to prevent him from changing his position. The case of Hosea need not be farther described; for it is manifest that what was in itself positively bad could not be enjoined by the Almighty.*

* "There are some things said to be done by the prophets in their narratives of these symbolical actions which could not really be done without sin; and therefore we may conclude that neither did God order them, nor did they really do them; but all was transacted in the prophet's imagination in a dream or vision only. Thus the prophet Hosea is said, at the command of God, to take a wife of whoredom, and to have children by her, which were called the children of whoredom. Those who will have this to be a real fact, allege that she is called a wife of whoredom; which intimates, they say, that though she had been a lewd person, yet the prophet was legally married to her. But they forget that the children she bore to him are called children of whoredom. Besides, he is ordered (chap. iii. 1.) 'to love another woman, an adulteress,' and is said to have bought or hired her 'for fifteen pieces of silver and an homer and a half of barley, to abide with him many days;' circumstances which evidently point out a lewd mistress and not a lawful wife."—*Jenning's Jewish Antiquities*.

Bishop Warburton attempts to explain this injunction by reminding the reader that such an action, being mere scenery, had no *moral import*; that is, it conveyed or implied none of those *intentions* in him who commanded it, and in him who obeyed the command, which go along with actions that have a moral import. "This shows why God might say to Hosea, *Go take unto thee a wife of whoredoms*. Though all actions which have no moral im-

It will be found that all such questions resolve themselves into the general principle, unfolded with great ability in the works of some of our divines, that, under the ancient economy, it was usual to teach by significant actions rather than by words. Of this the sacrifice of Isaac presents a remarkable instance, wherein by means of a scenical representation, the great doctrine of the atonement was set forth in a vivid light, not only to the eyes of the patriarch himself, but to those of every Israelite who shared in the hopes of that father of the faithful. A similar method of communicating the will of Heaven continued throughout the whole prophetical age, and may even be detected in various parts of the gospel. The narrative of our Saviour's temptation in the wilderness has usually been viewed in connection with this Jewish scheme of symbolical action; and perhaps we may be justified in referring to the same source the eloquent description given by St Paul of the unconverted sinner, whom he himself personated so far as to declare that the good he would he did not, and the evil which he would not that he did. According to Warburton and his followers, such scenes may be held as acted allegories; the main incidents being expressed in deeds rather than in words.

It is not unknown to the theological reader that several commentators, esteemed both pious and judicious, have extended the same principle of scenical representation to the occurrences which preceded the expulsion of our first parents from the garden of Eden. The whole conversation between Eve and the serpent has by them been considered as an allegorical semblance of the thoughts which passed in her heart; a series of symbols denoting the progress of evil

port are indifferent; yet some of this kind (which would even be indifferent had they a moral import) may, on the very account of their having no *moral import*, be the object of pleasure or displeasure."—*Divine Legation of Moses*, book vi. sec. 5, and note 33.

through the usual stages of doubt and disobedience until it reached its consummation in practical guilt. But it is obvious that limits must be imposed upon the application of a rule, which, though affording a ready key to the treasures of divine knowledge, may also lead to those “chambers of imagery,” where the lights of heavenly truth are confused and mingled with the deceitful glare of human error.*

The Hebrews, it now appears, were amply provided with the means of instruction, both in secular learning and religious knowledge, so far as these precious gifts were vouchsafed to the age of David and his more immediate successors. The seminaries of the Levites diffused around them, in all the tribes where they were established, the refinement and taste to which the love of letters, of music, and of the kindred arts never fails to give birth. To preserve and perpetuate their acquirements successive generations of prophets arose, some of whom made additions to the most splendid parts of their literature, while others recorded the history of their nation, and announced the judgments by which it was at length to be overwhelmed. Thousands of them, no doubt, passed away without leaving a name; but the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Zechariah, and of the other inspired seers, will for ever remain a monument of the excellence to which the children of Israel had

* Among the commentators alluded to is to be found the name of Pole, the author of the Synopsis. “Acutissimè omnium sensisse mihi videtur Abarbanel, qui negat serpentem allocutum esse mulierem (neque enim dicitur, ut de Balaami asina, *aperuit Deus os serpentis*); sed prosopopœia est, qualia multa sunt; et Psal. cxlviii. 7, *Laudate Dominum, dracones*, &c. Job xxviii. 14, *Abyssus dicit, Non est in me*. Et Gen. iii. 14, *Deus dicitur allocutus Serpentem*; quasi vero mutum et brutum animal allocutus esset. Quod dicatur, v. 6, *Vidit mulier quod bonu esset ad vescendum*, &c.: non autem, *audivit vocem serpentis*, inde probari evidenter ait Abarbanel eum non allocutum esse mulierem, sed hoc dici quod cum serpens in illam arborem sæpius ascendisset, et, inspectante Eva, commedisset, nec tamen mortuus esset, cepit ea cogitare illos fructus non esse lethales, idque perinde fuisse ac si serpens dixisset, *Non moriemini*.”—*Syn. Crit.* vol. i. in loc.

attained, at a period when the rest of the world was sunk in ignorance and superstition.*

It cannot have escaped the reader, that of the distinguished prophets Elijah and Elisha no writings have been preserved. Their history, their discourses, and their miracles are indeed recorded in the Books of the Kings; but no predictions respecting future ages, no revelations applicable to the christian economy, have been embodied in the sacred volume. They boldly withstood the tyranny of wicked princes, and reproved the sins of the people; forewarning both of the terrible effects of the divine vengeance should they continue impenitent. At their word fire descended from heaven on the heads of wicked men; their threatenings were followed by the most marvellous results; the elements were obedient to their commands; and the most savage animals felt the influence of their authority.

But their office was confined to exhortation and rebuke, and did not extend to the composition of sacred songs, nor to the description of the happier era which their labours were instrumental in accomplishing. They restricted themselves to the duties of a prophet in the literal sense of the term; the verbal exposition and enforcement of divine truth. In this they followed the example of Moses, their great law-giver, to whom his brother Aaron is said to have acted as a prophet when he explained his sentiments to Pharaoh, and also when he divided with him the toil of instructing the children of Israel. When the burden of the people became too great for this holy missionary, seventy individuals were empowered to assist him in his important duty. The Lord

* The reader is referred to the following works on the prophets and their schools:—Venema *Praelectiones de Methodo Prophetica*. Croxall's *Scripture Politics*. Wheatley on the Schools of the Prophets. Witsii *Miscellanea Sacra*. Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae*. Michaelis' *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*. Jahn's *Biblical Antiquities*. Jennings' *Jewish Antiquities*. Parr's *Works*, vol. v. Sermon ix.

imparted of the spirit or authority of his servant to the chosen elders, who “prophesied” ever after, and taught their younger brethren in the camp.*

This chapter professes to give nothing more than an outline of all that is known respecting the arts and sciences at the rise of the Hebrew kingdoms, about eleven centuries before the Christian era, a period of great simplicity in Palestine. But as the descendants of Jacob lived long among a people celebrated above all others among the ancients for their skill in the mechanical arts, it may be presumed that, though their occupations were chiefly rural, they were not altogether strangers to the more common labours of the craftsmen. Indeed, from circumstances incidentally mentioned in the oldest of their sacred books, it is manifest that they had become intimately acquainted with the properties of metals, the texture of various kinds of cloth, and even the fixing of colours. The achievement of the molten calf, and its subsequent destruction, however discreditable to their constancy as the visible church of Jehovah, prove that there was among them cunning artificers to work in gold, in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, and in carving of timber. The furniture of the tabernacle alone indicates very distinctly the high attainments which the followers of Moses had reached in the arts which minister to luxurious ornament. Besides the curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and rams’ skins dyed red, there were the ark of the testimony, the mercy-seat, the golden candlestick with its seven branches, the altar of burnt-offering, and the laver, and the cloths of

* Numbers xi, 16—26. The word prophet, it is well known, literally means a *speaker*; a distinction which applies not only to the talent for instructing or expounding, but also to the gift which raised this class of men above the mere seer or dreamer of dreams. It is not therefore surprising that among a body so numerous few should have thought it necessary to write. After a general massacre of the prophets by the hand of Jezebel, Obadiah could still find a hundred to hide by fifty in a cave. 1 Kings xviii. 4.

service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments for his sons to minister in the priest's office, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense for the holy place.*

After the settlement in the holy land, the uses of war and even of agriculture would secure a certain degree of attention to manufacturers in wood and iron; while the claims of religion, in its pure or idolatrous form, would from time to time put under requisition all the skill of the founder, the carver, and the statuary. At no period did the demand entirely cease for *teraphim* and a house of gods. Amidst the greatest penury a few shekels were always reserved to make a carved image and a molten image, and thereby to procure the favour of that Omnipotent Spirit, whose attributes were in this manner set forth to the eye and kept in constant remembrance.

In truth, the ingenuity of the Hebrews seems to have been principally confined to the furtherance and embellishment of religion. The magnificence of their temple, and the variety of their musical instruments, supply the most favourable specimens of their skill as artists, and their taste as lovers of harmony. In the interval which passed between the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness and the dedication of the house of God at Jerusalem, great progress appears to have been made in that fascinating art, which, while it captivates the savage, gives suitable exercise to the most improved intellect. At first, the sacrifice was accompanied either with the sound of horns, or with the chanting of the Levites and the unmodulated shouts of the worshippers. But in the temple there was a great variety of stringed instruments, wind instruments, and drums. Writers on this subject give the names of thirty-four, comprehending all which belonged to those three classes; but it must be acknowledged that

* Exodus xxxi. 7—12; xxxv. 5—20; xxxvi. xxxvii. and xxxviii.

their descriptions are not perfectly free from obscurity, and that there is no small difficulty in tracing any resemblance between the kinnor, the hasur, the mnanaim, the hiezab, the shophar, the kerem, and the other tubes which filled the hands of the Levites, and such instruments as are most familiar to modern ears. In many instances, indeed, there remains much doubt whether the Hebrew term denotes an implement for producing sound, or merely the name of a tune.*

Whatever progress the Israelites had made in the arts when they settled in Canaan, it is certain that they held those in honour by whom they were cultivated. An ingenious mind and a dexterous hand were esteemed as gifts of Heaven; as the token of a good spirit; and as a proof that no grievous sin attached to the character. All such acquirements were prized as a minor inspiration. The musician especially was placed on the same footing with a learned man; and even in their days of corruption, when their commonwealth was hastening to its close, the Hebrews treated with respect all artists and mechanics as persons in whom the mental powers had attained a certain improvement.

Although the arts cannot reach a high degree of perfection without the aid of the sciences, yet the necessities of mankind are found to carry the former a considerable length before the knowledge of first principles in any department has assumed the appearance of system. In some countries, there is reason to believe, the arts have survived the sciences on which they were originally founded; and no one can

* Calmet's Dissertation on the Musical Instruments of the Hebrews. "Chrysostom and Theodoret on Psalm cl. observe, that it was purely out of condescension that God permitted the Hebrews to make use of music and the sound of instruments in his temple. He ordained nothing about these matters in the Law, and it was long before they were brought into the tabernacle. David was the man who first established them, and introduced into the worship of the Lord singers and players on instruments."

examine the present condition of China or of Egypt, and mark the prodigies of mechanical skill of which the remains every where meet the eye, without being satisfied that the ancients possessed a degree of philosophical information which their posterity have not inherited. But the Jews, whose studies were in some measure limited by their peculiar polity, as the depositaries of the true faith, not less than by their pursuits as an agricultural people, seem never to have arrived at great eminence as astronomers or chemists. Even their acquaintance with geography was very imperfect; having little affinity to those exalted notions of creative power which, while they adorn their sacred compositions, breathe all the fire of devotion into their songs of praise. It has been said of them, with much truth and discernment, that in religion the ancient Hebrews were men, but children in every thing else.

Among the sciences which in modern times add so much to the power and security of the human being, medicine is entitled to a distinguished place. But the same honour appears not to have been conferred upon it in any of the oriental nations; owing chiefly to the utter ignorance of first principles in physiology, an aversion to anatomical researches, and an undue confidence in certain superstitious rites and ridiculous incantations. At Babylon, it is well known, the sick were laid in the streets, with the view of obtaining from those who might happen to pass by a knowledge of the treatment which had proved beneficial in any similar disease. The Egyptians carried their friends, when labouring under an unwonted distemper, into the temple of Serapis; the Greeks conveyed their patients into the temple of Esculapius: in both of which places there appear to have been preserved written recipes, by means of which various cures had been effected. The art of healing among the Hebrews, as well as among the subjects of Pharaoh, was committed to

the priests, who were bound by the law to examine into every case of leprosy and other infectious ailments. From some incidents mentioned in the Gospel, it seems not improbable that sick folks were occasionally taken to places where supernatural remedies were wont to be procured ; where a sacred influence from time to time descended and gave relief to such of the sufferers as had faith and patience to wait the favourable hour. But in the age of David and Solomon, hardly any traces present themselves of medical knowledge considered as a science. The attempt to sooth by means of music the nervous irritation which afflicted Saul, bears the nearest resemblance to the discovery of a pathological principle in the management of a complex disorder.

I had proceeded so far before I could procure the interesting work on Hebrew hieroglyphics of which the title is given below.* As the ingenious scheme devised by the author bears a direct reference to the literature of the remarkable people whom Moses led out of Egypt, it cannot but appear important in the eye of every reader who is desirous to discover the principles on which the first steps were taken towards that mighty object—so interesting to our faith as well as to a rational curiosity—the composition of the more ancient part of the sacred volume.

With regard to the origination of alphabetical sounds no new views are advanced. These are at once ascribed to the process, explained in a former part of this chapter, by which picture-writing is rendered phonetic ; the initial letter in the *name* of the thing represented gradually superseding the rough delineation of the thing itself. A mark or character,

* Hebrew Characters derived from Hieroglyphics : The original Pictures applied to the Interpretation of various Words and Passages in the Sacred Writings, and especially of the History of the Creation and Fall of Man. To which is added, an Inquiry into the Origin and Purport of the Rites of Bacchus. By John Lamb, D. D., Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

restricted to a particular utterance of the voice, is observed in process of time to take the place of the picture : such as an L for the figure of a lion, and a C for that of a cup. The Egyptians at present get credit for having accomplished this convenient substitution, because the moderns are not acquainted with any nation who preceded them in science, literature, and the arts : And it is observed by Dr Lamb, that when this important discovery was once made, the characters would soon be reduced to the same or nearly the same amount as we now find them. The number of consonants does not depend upon the genius of any particular language, but upon certain organs bestowed upon man ; and as these are uniform throughout the whole race, the same alphabet would be found applicable to every tongue. Nor would all different nations need to repeat the process by which the first inventor had arrived at so happy a result ; they would merely have to translate their own pictures into the two-and-twenty sounds already provided for them. Hence it is that almost every tribe is found claiming the honour of having invented an alphabet ; and the claim may perhaps be admitted so far as it respects the process of reducing their peculiar pictures to phonetic signs after the first discoverers had given them the key.

Proceeding thus on the ground prepared for him by others, the author next undertakes to apply these general principles to the Hebrew language ; which, he thinks, is still so little altered from its original structure as to afford the means of re-translating a part of it into its former picture-characters. It is now in the same state in which it was in the time of Moses,—1500 years before the birth of Christ,—when the sacred books of the Jews were written ; and as the nation afterwards adopted another vernacular tongue, it has not undergone those changes which are inevitable to every spoken language. In endeavouring to

realize his purpose, he previously aims at the accomplishment of three distinct objects:—1. To obtain the ideal meaning of each letter. 2. To discover the hieroglyph which contains this ideal meaning, and at the same time may easily have passed into the form of the letter as now written. 3. To find the Hebrew word of one syllable, beginning with this letter, which was the ancient name of the hieroglyph.

With respect to the first, the *ideal meaning* of the letter, the reader is supplied with an example under כ, which of itself denotes the action of “smiting.” This letter with its pronominal affixes and prefixes occurs about five hundred times in the Bible, and always in the same sense. Grammarians, indeed, give ככ, a triliteral, as the root of this word; but Dr Lamb maintains it is quite evident, that however necessary these two formative letters may be for euphony, or for compliance with some canon of the language, they have no effect on the ideal power of כ, which contains within itself the notion of smiting. The sense of a Hebrew word, it therefore appears, may rest on one letter.

The following steps—the connecting a hieroglyph with the *idea* and the *form* of each letter, and the finding a word of one syllable beginning with that letter and being the original name of the hieroglyph—cannot be rendered intelligible without the aid of engravings. It may be proper to mention, however, that *Cah*, the ancient name of כ, means a sling, and hence the radical notion of smiting; but it cannot be added that the hieroglyph in this case bears much resemblance to the alphabetical character. In truth, like all Hebrew etymologists, the learned author has occasionally given reins to his imagination, and darted forward to conclusions which his reasoning, always ingenious and amusing, does not fully support.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE COMMERCE OF THE HEBREWS, AND OF THE
CONTIGUOUS NATIONS IN THE DAYS OF SOLOMON
AND OF HIS IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS.

THE great objects for which the posterity of Abraham were by Divine Providence separated from every other people, were in some degree incompatible with such an unrestricted intercourse as the usages of commerce necessarily require. On this account, the laws instituted by Moses throw no light on the principles of trade among the Hebrews, and supply nothing more than general directions for an honest and amicable exchange of commodities within the limits of their own territory. But the situation of Palestine was so favourable to commercial dealings, that her inhabitants, as soon as they enjoyed the benefit of a regular government, could not fail to perceive the advantages placed within their reach, more especially by the caravans which regularly crossed the Syrian desert on their periodical journeys between the Mediterranean and the Persian gulf. So early indeed as the period when the sons of Jacob fed their flocks in the vale of

Dothan, notice is also afforded of those Midianite merchantmen who were accustomed to pass the wilderness of Arabia “with their camels bearing spicery, balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.”*

The Sacred Scriptures, our best historical guide in those early days, give us, moreover, such information respecting the original inhabitants of Canaan, as leaves no doubt that they derived much wealth from their transactions with the migratory dealers who traversed their borders. Even Abraham is said to have been “very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold;” a statement which, when viewed in connection with the fact that Palestine produced not these precious metals, proves that he must have exchanged the produce of his folds for the treasures of a country in which mines were abundant. In Jericho, too, there was great store of silver and gold, vessels of brass and of iron; and among the spoils of that city the covetous eye of Achan beheld “a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight.” It is mentioned also, that the Ishmaelites and people of Midian wore gold ear-rings; a token of the riches which they had acquired by their commercial habits. When defeated by Gideon in a decisive battle, a great number of them fell prisoners into the hands of his soldiers; upon which the conqueror, desirous to make an offering to the Lord of Hosts, requested that these last would give to him “every man the ear-rings of his prey. And the weight of the golden ear-rings was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold, besides ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were about their camels’ necks.”†

* Genesis xxxvii. 25.

† Genesis xliii. 2. Joshua vii. 21. Judges viii. 24, 26.

From these circumstances, incidentally recorded by the sacred annalist, it is clear that the Canaanitish states, long before the invasion of Joshua, had attained great affluence and even a taste for refinement. Nor can there be any doubt that they owed this distinction to the operations of a prosperous trade, which, from an era that cannot now be precisely ascertained, had formed a path through their territory. The leaders of the Hebrew camp could not be ignorant of these advantages, and might, had such been their object, have rendered them permanent. Gilead had surrendered to their arms ; the fords of Jordan were subject to their authority ; and as the Ishmaelites were disposed to continue their occupation as carriers to the Egyptians as well as to the dependencies of Sidon, the Tribes, when under the son of Nun, might have added to the honours of victory all the emoluments of a lucrative commerce.

But that the Israelites were not meant to take a prominent part in this traffic is manifest from the circumstance of their being excluded from any share in the western coast, though the promised land reached within a few miles of the sea. Nor does it appear that their inspired lawgiver ever had it in view that they should establish any permanent settlements on the Arabian gulf. It is true, indeed, that in God's name he promised that their border should reach from the Red sea to the sea of the Philistines ; an event which actually took place under the administration of David and Solomon. But this prediction was connected with another, implying the temporary ascendancy of Jacob over his elder brother, and does not appear to grant any authority for seizing the domains assigned to the prince of Edom. The word of Jehovah came to Moses, saying, " Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir, and they shall be afraid of you : take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore, meddle not

with them ; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot-breadth ; because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.”*

It may likewise be observed, that the trading people of Canaan, and more especially the Sidonians, are not among those against whom Moses commanded the Hebrews to wage a war of extermination. Their peculiar pursuits, while they might be profitable to an agricultural state, such as that meditated by the leader of the Israelites, could not interfere with the cultivation of land or the pasturing of herds ; and therefore the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, though they ceased not to be idolaters, lived on terms of amity with the subjects of David and his son. Hiram the king was not only the ally but the confidential friend of both these monarchs ; and so little were the conquering tribes disposed to extend their power into the districts possessed by the maritime cities, that the principal rivers which run through Phenicia,—the Lycus, the Adonis, and Orontes,—and connect the fertile regions at the foot of Lebanon with the sea, are not once mentioned in the Bible as an object of contest. It is remarkable, too, that the conduct of the Tyrian merchants, who on one occasion were detected in dealing for the love of gain in Jewish slaves, is represented as a breach of a “ brotherly covenant.”†

The indulgence shown to certain Canaanitish communities, and the good relations which they on their part maintained with the Israelites, is remarkable in a political point of view, and particularly when we consider the hostility that the Mosaical law directed against the whole race. But the Sidonians were useful neighbours to the farmers and

* Exodus xxiii. 31. Deut. ii. 4, 5.

† Amos i. 9.—“ Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof ; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant.”

herdsmen of Palestine, inasmuch as they furnished a profitable market for their produce, their corn, cattle, honey, wine, and oil, and supplied them in return with luxuries in a cheaper and more convenient form than they could procure them by an immediate traffic with the remote shores of Arabia and of the Indian ocean. Nor were the advantages conferred upon the merchants of Tyre less obvious or valuable ; for their own narrow territory could not raise a sufficient stock of provisions to meet the wants of their numerous manufacturers and sailors, and therefore they naturally regarded a nation of husbandmen as their best allies. In truth, the wars so successfully pursued by the army of Joshua against the seven devoted nations of Canaan tended greatly to augment the commerce of Sidon, and afterwards of her daughter Tyre. The corrupted principalities extirpated by that commander were, generally speaking, devoted to the inland trade already mentioned, carried on by means of caravans ; and accordingly to a certain extent they must have proved rivals to the mercantile commonwealths established on the coast. The Philistines, more especially, whom David subdued, would not have remained indifferent spectators of the wealth which flowed upon that city, which in Scripture is called “ the distributor of crowns, whose merchants are princes.” It may therefore be presumed that the progress of the Hebrew arms was not regarded without satisfaction by the Tyrian chiefs ; because their own interests could not fail to be promoted by the conquests of a people who themselves did not yet aspire to the gainful enterprises of foreign commerce, and who dispossessed those whom ambition not less than their many local advantages would soon have led to emulate the Sidonians in ships and colonies.

At the epoch when Solomon ascended the throne, his subjects had made such progress in civilisation as to per-

ceive more clearly than at any former period the benefits of trade. The victories gained by his father gave him ports on the Red sea, and the Tyrians were ready to supply him with ships, mariners, and pilots. The Idumeans, having been regarded by that people as rivals in commerce, met with little favour from the Jewish king, whose hopes of success in his new undertaking were all centred in the hearty co-operation of his neighbours on the Mediterranean coast. "Therefore went Solomon to Ezion-geber, and to Eloth, at the sea-side in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent him, by the hands of his servants, ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to king Solomon." It is added, that he had "at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks."*

The notices supplied in the Bible with respect to the commercial dealings of the Israelites are so few and meagre, that the most acute commentators find much difficulty in determining the countries with which they traded, and more especially whether, upon passing the straits of Babelmandeh, they directed their course towards the east or towards the west. The situation of Ophir has not been satisfactorily fixed; and it is suspected, that besides the Tharshish or Tartessus in Spain, to whom the Phenicians resorted, there was a town, or perhaps a district, of the same name on the southern shores of Africa. Hence arises the necessity of considering the subject on broader grounds than can be supplied by the brief biography of Solomon, or by any allusions in the Jewish prophets to the mercantile proceedings of their countrymen at a later period.

* 2 Chronicles viii. 17, 18. 1 Kings x. 22.

To prove how various are the opinions of authors relative to the situation of Ophir, it will be sufficient to mention, that Arias Montanus identified it with Peru in the western hemisphere ; Josephus imagined that its features coincided with those of Malacca in the Indian ocean ; and Bochart was satisfied that it could be no other than the island of Ceylon. Montesquieu, Bruce, D'Anville, and others, favoured the notion that the land of gold must have been in Africa, in a mountainous district beyond the sources of the Blue river and the remotest bounds of the Ethiopian nations. Gosselin and Prideaux produce good reasons for their belief that the place to which Solomon traded was situated in the southern parts of Arabia, or on an island in the sea which washes its farthest shores. In confirmation of this hypothesis, the reader is reminded, that in the tenth chapter of Genesis Ophir is joined with Havilah and Jobab, the three sons of Joktan, all of whom had their residence in Arabia Felix, most probably beyond the straits of Babelmandeb.*

The evidence that Solomon obtained gold from the country now described is unquestionable, for it is expressly said, that “ all the kings of Arabia brought silver and gold to him.” Nor is it in any degree improbable that the treasure drawn from the mines of Ethiopia was then conveyed through Abyssinia into Yemen, according to the practice pursued by the natives at the present day. Agatharchides relates, that the Alileans and Cassandrines, in the southern districts of Arabia, had among them gold in such plenty that in exchanging it for iron they gave double weight, for brass three times the weight, and for silver ten times ; adding, that in digging into the earth they found gobbits of pure gold, which needed not refining, the smallest of which were as large as olive-stones, and others of much greater size. On

* Vincent on the Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients, vol. ii. p. 266. Bruce's Travels, vol. ii. p. 354—371.

this ground Prideaux concludes, that any place within the compass of the southern sea which can best furnish gold, almug-trees, and precious stones, and in the quantity brought home to Solomon in one voyage, may be the Ophir mentioned in the Sacred Writings. "Only thus much I cannot forbear to say, that if the southern part of Arabia did furnish the world in those times with the best gold and in the greatest quantity, as good authors say, they that would have the Ophir of the Holy Scriptures to be there situated, seem of all others to have the best foundation for their conjecture." Eupolemus, in a fragment preserved by Eusebius, states that this disputed territory was an island in the Red sea; meaning by that expression not the Arabian gulf, to which such appellation is now commonly restricted, but the great ocean which laves the shores of the continent from India to Madagascar.*

The duration of the voyage may at first sight appear inconsistent with the supposition that Ophir was not farther distant from Eloth and Ezion-geber than the southern confines of Arabia Felix. But the time employed by the navigators of Hiram may be explained on a different principle. The Phenicians, as we find indicated in one of the poems of Homer, combined the two professions of seamen and merchants, and, moving from one port to another, bought and sold according to the nature of their cargo, and the wants of the people whom they visited. They had no factors to whom they could consign their goods, or who could

* Prideaux, vol. i. p. 9—12. Michaelis, from Genesis x. 29, concludes that Ophir must be in Arabia. In his questions proposed to the Danish travellers (Niebuhr and his companions), he recommends inquiry to be made after native gold. But Dr Vincent remarks, that the scriptural account of the gold of Ophir could not be affected by the result of their researches; for silver is not now found at Carthage in Spain, where the Phenicians, Carthaginians, and Romans obtained it in great abundance.—*Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, p. 267.

furnish them, at a short notice, with such commodities as they might wish to take in return: for which reason they found it necessary to remain at successive harbours until they had disposed of their merchandise, and supplied themselves with articles suited to the consumption of the home-market. This mode of conducting business was necessarily attended with great delay; and if the servants of Hiram traded in the Eastern ocean according to the method they are known to have followed elsewhere, the duration of a voyage cannot be held as an accurate measure of the distance to which the mariners had proceeded. In those days it was not uncommon for a fleet to be absent from their native port five or six years; the leaders devoting their attention all the while to commerce rather than to navigation.*

In tracing the history of mercantile intercourse among the inhabitants of western Syria, the Phenicians stand in juxtaposition to the Hebrews; and the first attempt of the latter people to extend their dealings beyond the narrow confines of the holy land required, as we have just seen, the aid of Tyrian mechanics, ships, and perhaps also of capital. But, following the sure though feeble light supplied in the books of Moses, we perceive indications of an older commerce, of which Arabia must have been the centre or the medium, and which, as has been already stated, directed its main channel towards the rich capitals of Egypt. That

* Pliny, describing a voyage of a shorter distance than that of Solomon's navy, namely, from Azenia to Ocila, makes it extend to five years. Speaking of cinnamon, he says, "Quamobrem illi maxime id petunt, producuntque vix quinto anno reverti negociatores, et multos interire."—*Hist. Nat.* lib. xii. c. 19.

The allusion to Homer respects *Odyss.* lib. xv. v. 455.

‘Οι δ’ ἱνιαυτον ἅπαντα παρ’ ἡμῖν αὐτοὶ μινοντες
 Ἐν νηὶ γλαφυρῇ βιοτον πολὺν ἱμπολοωντο.

A year they traffic, and their vessel load.

Their stores complete, and ready now to weigh,

A spy was sent their summons to convey.—*Pope.*

oriental spices were carried into that country is placed beyond doubt by the nature of the aromatics employed in the process of embalming their dead ; and in the Book of Exodus there is a list, comprehending cinnamon, cassia, myrrh, frankincense, calamus, stacte, onycha, and galbanum, all of which are the produce either of India or Arabia. Cinnamon, for example, is a spice which grows not any where nearer to Egypt and Palestine than the island of Ceylon or the coast of Malabar. If then these commodities were found at Thebes and Jerusalem, it is evident that they must have been imported from India ; and it is equally obvious there were, even in those early times, regular carriers between the remote nations of Asia and the kingdom of the west,—a stated communication between the cities of the Nile and the farmers of Hindostan. It is not improbable that the Egyptians themselves were ignorant of this fact ; for the Greeks and Romans, even so late as the time of Augustus, believed that cinnamon, as it was procured from Arabian merchants, was the produce of their country. But it has been proved from the Remains of Agatharchides, that the traders of Saba or Sabea maintained a regular intercourse with India ; and that, at the time when Egypt enjoyed a monopoly of oriental spices in the European market, the Sabeans possessed the same advantage with respect to the dominions of Pharaoh. With these circumstances the Grecian authors were either not at all acquainted, or very imperfectly informed ; and if such were the case down to the very dawn of the Christian era, it may be presumed that their knowledge was not more complete at a still earlier age. Their inquiries had not extended to the means by which Arabia Felix obtained those precious commodities with which she supplied the luxurious palaces of Thebes, the princes of Judah, and the islands of the Archipelago.

It is the opinion of the learned that, while a portion of the

Indian trade was conveyed through Persia and the northern provinces to the chief towns in the Assyrian empire, a large share was conducted by sea to the Arabian ports ; and this conclusion will hold equally good whether we suppose the merchants of Sabea to have sailed to Ceylon and Malabar in their own ships, or to have obtained the goods they went to purchase, in Carmania or at the mouths of the Indus. At no period were the Persians, Egyptians, or Hindoos addicted to maritime affairs ; and, excluding them, there was no other people but the inhabitants of Yemen who could furnish a sufficient number of mariners, either as carriers or merchants in the Indian ocean.

The branch of this commerce, which was transacted through the medium of caravans in a higher latitude, attaches to it a great degree of interest, on account of certain historical legends still floating on the current of tradition. The communication with India, through the central provinces of the Asiatic continent, stretches back to an epoch prior to the exode of the Israelites, and indicates in a manner not to be misunderstood considerable attainments in civilisation by both the parties who engaged in it. Semiramis is said to have erected a large column on which her immense conquests were described as extending from Nineveh to the Itamenes or Jumna on the east, and southward to the country which produced myrrh and frankincense ; that is, to India on the one hand, and Arabia on the other. This pillar, it is granted, may be fabulous, and so may be the whole history of that celebrated queen ; but it will nevertheless be admitted that there is much consistency in the fable ; for the tradition that the Assyrians did make an irruption into India is almost universal in ancient writers, while their return through Gedrosia, by the route which Alexander afterwards pursued, is noticed by all the biographers of the son of Philip. If, therefore, any historical

truth is concealed in the exploits of Semiramis, an authority will be thereby supplied for believing in a constant intercourse established, even before her days, between India and Assyria, and also an occasional communication between the latter empire and the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. This traffic, too, would account for the introduction into Egypt of the gums, spices, and drugs of Hindostan, twenty-one centuries before the Christian era, and nearly five hundred years prior to the birth of Moses.*

But all the ancients who undertake to give any account of oriental commerce direct the attention of their readers to Arabia, Egypt, and Phenicia, as the main channels through which it was conducted. The Arabians in particular, occupying a peninsula, enjoyed a vast extent of coast, and were not impeded in their maritime enterprises by any prejudice derived from habit or religious feeling. There is no history wherein they happen to be mentioned which does not represent them as pirates and merchants by sea, or as robbers and traders by land: and every author who alludes to their pursuits, even incidentally, describes them as masters of navigation, and the carriers of the Indian ocean. Sabea, Hadramaut, and Oman, were the residence of seafaring persons at an era coeval with the earliest annals of the human race; their occupation is not materially changed at the present day; and therefore it is not without reason the learned conclude that their industry sought a similar em-

* Semiramis is supposed to have flourished 2007 B. C. It is well observed by the editor of the *Periplus*, "that when two fables of two different countries agree, there is always reason to suppose that they are founded on truth. The Mahabharat is perhaps as fabulous as the history of Semiramis; but this work specifies upon a variety of occasions the great attention of the Indian sovereigns to pay tribute to their western conquerors. I cannot trace this to its causes or consequences; but it always seems to justify the idea that there had been some conquest of India by the nations which inhabited those provinces which afterwards composed the Persian empire. It is this conquest in which the Grecian accounts of Semiramis and the Mahabharat agree." —Vol. ii. p. 62; and *Dow's Hindostan*, vol. i. p. 1—30.

ployment long before they attracted the notice of Grecian authors.

There is not surely any undue boldness in the conjecture that a nation, with such dispositions, might at a very early period cross the gulf of Persia from Oman to Carmania. In some places the distance is less than forty miles ; the opposite coast is visible from their own shores ; and as soon as they had accomplished this short passage, the facility of advancing into the rich provinces of Western India would induce them to proceed. Such steps, it is true, are supposed to have been taken before the age of history, and therefore can neither be confirmed nor illustrated by any reference to written documents : but as it is manifest that a trade between the Arabians and the people beyond the gulf which marks their eastern limits did exist when the light of human records was first diffused, it may be legitimately inferred that it began at a still earlier date.

Agatharchides, whose work has obtained the confidence of posterity, found Sabea, now more usually distinguished by the appellation of Yemen, in possession of all the splendour that an exclusive enjoyment of the Indian trade has ever produced. It is universally allowed that the chief entrepôt must have been established either in this district, at Hadramaut, or Oman ; for all these provinces lie within the range of the monsoons, and there is reason to believe that the inhabitants availed themselves of these periodical currents of the atmosphere at a very remote period. It is in fact concluded that their knowledge in this respect was prior to the building of Thebes ; and that the monopoly, which afterwards passed to the Egyptian capital, had for several ages been fixed on the eastern shores of the Red sea. .

The sovereigns of the Nile could not be insensible to the many advantages attending a commerce so extremely lucrative ; and in the dawn of their history, accordingly, we can

discover the disjointed portions of a narrative which had for its object the development of a scheme devised for the purpose of securing it. More than a thousand years before the birth of Christ, an ambitious prince, to whom Herodotus has given the name of Sesostris, carried his arms into Syria, Phenicia, and Palestine, and ultimately conducted an expedition through the straits of Babelmandeb into that part of the southern ocean called the Erythrean sea. That his exploits were magnified by the priests of Egypt there cannot be any doubt; but that commerce was his object, as well as territorial dominion, is manifest from his establishing a fleet on the Red sea. His views must have been directed to Arabia and the shores eastward of the Persian gulf; the countries whence his own was supplied with the most valuable merchandise, which, it would seem, he was determined to purchase or command in the original market.

But no permanent success could attend the efforts of a sovereign who laboured to fix the seat of a foreign trade at a city removed so far from the seacoast. Thebes and Memphis, having no direct communication with the ocean, could not retain the commercial benefits thus unnaturally forced from their wonted channel. As long therefore as Egypt remained under the sway of its native sovereigns, Sidon, Tyre, Aradus, Cyprus, Greece, Sicily, and Carthage, were successively enriched by the trade which passed through Arabia and the several ports of the Red sea. During that long period, the Egyptians themselves were hardly known beyond the mouths of their celebrated river; and they willingly sacrificed all the wealth and influence which belong to the masters of the ocean, to nations more animated with the love of enterprise and less restricted by national prejudice.* For this reason, the Ptolemies, who had studied the principles of trade and navigation,

* Diodor. Sicul. lib. i. c. 66—69.

placed their staple at Alexandria, to which they endeavoured to attract the merchants of the east, the north, and the west. Their fleets were superior to all that had ever appeared in the Mediterranean; and their political power soon became so great that nothing but a succession of weak and wicked princes could have destroyed it.

The Grecian dynasty, in short, tried every expedient to supersede the monopoly at Sabea, and to obtain a share of it for their thriving capital on the borders of the Mediterranean. The straits of the Red sea were passed; the farthest ports of Arabia were explored; the ^{*}marts on the coast of Africa were visited; and Indian commodities were found in all of them. Encouraged by the result of these minor expeditions, the sailors of Philadelphus and Euergetes extended their progress eastward till they reached the estuary of the Indus, without, however, deviating to any considerable distance from the line of the shore. But the expense of such voyages, it soon appeared, more than equalled all the profits of the trade; and it was therefore resolved to purchase the luxuries of the east in the old markets, leaving for a time to the Arabian merchants all the advantages which their superior knowledge of wind and tides had originally procured for them.*

These considerations seem calculated to induce the belief that at a very early age, even prior to the era of the patriarchs, the communication with India was open to the natives of Arabia; that Thebes owed much of its splendour to the commerce which was thereby introduced; and that Memphis at a later period rose to pre-eminence from the same cause. The former is supposed to be the No-Amon of the Scriptures,

* Strabo, lib. xvi., does certainly mean to say that a considerable fleet went to India, but not till the Romans were masters of Egypt; and whether they performed the whole voyage, or only to Arabia for Indian commodities, is a question which cannot now be solved. If we suppose them to reach the mouths of the Indus, it is the full extent that can be required; for Pliny expressly says, that the ports on the coast of Malabar were only beginning to be known in his age.

and to have been reduced by Nebuchadnezzar, though its ruin was not completed till the invasion of Cambyses. We perceive also, from this brief outline of history, the various fluctuations of power, and the changing seats of commercial activity within the realms of Pharaoh, independently of the doubtful chronology and feigned narratives of the priests. When Alexandria, in its turn, became the principal mart, the Egyptian Greeks seized the employment of carriers on the Mediterranean, as well as that of factors and agents for the importation of oriental produce.

The cities which had risen under the former system now sunk silently into insignificance ; and so wise was the new policy, and so deeply had it taken root, that the Romans, upon their conquest of the country, deemed it more expedient to leave the rising capital in possession of her privileges, than to alter the course of trade or to occupy it themselves. Egypt, in point of fact, was never in the strict meaning of the word a province ; it was a prefecture, governed not by the senate but by the emperor himself. No prætor or proconsul ever had the command ; no man above the equestrian order was ever made prefect ; and no person was allowed to enter the country without an express license from the imperial court. These circumstances illustrate the wisdom of the Greeks in the establishment of the system, and the good sense of the Romans in contenting themselves with the revenue, instead of aiming at the absolute property of the kingdom. This revenue, amounting to more than three millions of our money, they enjoyed upwards of six hundred years ; and till the epoch of the Mohammedan ascendancy, Alexandria continued to be the second city of the empire in rank, and the first perhaps in commerce, prosperity, and wealth.*

* Preliminary Disquisitions, prefixed to his translation of the Periplus

The Hebrews appear not to have attained any eminence as navigators, though stimulated by the hope of rivalling the children of Edom in the rich trade of gold and spices, and of equalling the subjects of Pharaoh in magnificence and power. After the days of Solomon, the dissensions which finally divided the kingdoms of Israel and Judah withdrew the public interest from the treasures of Ophir, and the myrrh, frankincense, apes, and peacocks of the Asiatic provinces. Meanwhile, the Idumeans and their kindred tribes recovered their independence, and for a time threw off the yoke imposed upon them by David; nor was it till the reign of Jehoshaphat, who joined intrigue to force of arms, that they were once more subjected to the dominion of the Jewish kings. After this, says the compiler of the Second Book of Chronicles, "he joined himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, to make ships to go to Tarshish; and they made the ships in Ezion-geber. Then Eliezer, the son of Dodavah of Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish."*

The rocks near the head of the Elanitic gulf have proved fatal to other navies besides that of the combined sovereigns of Palestine. There is a concealed reef, resembling the spine of an animal, whence Ezion-geber takes its name, which even to the more experienced seamen of modern times occa-

of the Erythrean Sea, by Dr Vincent, to whom the reader is indebted for some of the remarks in the text.

Sicard, in the *Lettres Edifiantes*, tome v. c. 7, makes the income of Egypt under the Romans amount to three hundred millions of francs, or £12,454,500. Dr Vincent, following Strabo, takes the revenue at a medium calculation. The Greek geographer says that under Auletes, the worst of the Ptolemies, it was equal to £2,421,875; but adds that the Romans managed it much better, and even doubled it.—*Lib. xvii. p. 798; folio.*

* 2 Chronicles xx. 35—37.

sions much danger and loss ; the approach to Elath, in this respect, presenting the same obstacles to navigation that prevail throughout the greater part of the Red sea. The fatal issue of the undertaking planned by Jehoshaphat seems to have prevented any similar attempt during the remainder of his reign ; and in the days of his son Jehoram, the Edomites rebelled against their conquerors, and, placing at their head an able leader, bade defiance to the armies of Judah. A war ensued, in which the king of Jerusalem appears to have gained some advantages, for, “ going forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him, he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in ;” but this success, it may be presumed, procured for him nothing more than the means of making a safe retreat, as the insurrection of the Idumeans was never suppressed either by himself or by any of his successors. “ The Edomites,” saith the divine historian, “ revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day.”*

But the Phenicians, though disappointed in the power or perseverance of their Hebrew allies, did not relinquish the purpose which induced them to court the friendship of Solomon. They next turned their views to Egypt, under the protection of whose monarchs they prosecuted a most valuable branch of Indian commerce ; contending so successfully with the national aversion to traffic, that they seem to have prevailed upon several of the kings to establish convenient marts on their coasts, and even to engage in maritime expeditions. The exploits of Sesostris and the schemes of Pharaoh-Necho may be consigned to the region of fable ; but it is nevertheless certain that in the reign of the former the Egyptians ventured into the Red sea ; that in the time of the latter foreign trade had been so much extended as to

* 2 Chronicles xxi. 8—10.

give rise to the idea of sending navigators to discover other countries, supposed to teem with more abundant riches ; and finally that, in order to facilitate the transport of merchandise, it was deemed expedient to form a canal between the Red sea and the Nile. In truth, the Phenicians were allowed to form a settlement or colony in the very capital of Egypt, one entire quarter of Memphis being inhabited by them ; a manifest proof that, under the countenance of a powerful government, they carried on a considerable portion of the oriental trade through the Arabian stations on the opposite shore, as well as of that peculiar to Eastern Africa, conducted by caravans across the surrounding deserts.*

At a period subsequent to the Babylonian captivity, the various hordes who inhabited Arabia Petræa, sacrificing their distinctive appellations, become known to history under the more general description of Nabatheans. This nation occupied the lands bordering on the coast ; and not satisfied with obtaining such a share of the Indian commerce as might fall to the masters of a caravan, they traded directly with Yemen on the one hand, and with Phenicia on the other. Diodorus relates, that many of them were occupied in conveying along the shores of the Mediterranean incense, myrrh, and other valuable articles, which they received from tribes who brought them from Arabia Felix. The latter, instead of going so far as Tyre and Sidon, deposited at Petra, Elath, and other fortified places, their precious merchandise, which, according to circumstances, was sent to the towns successively established between Gaza and Pelusium. The Nabatheans must have acquired immense wealth, if we may form an idea of its extent from the anxiety which Antigo-

* Herodotus, Euterpe, c. 112, confirms the statement made in the text. *Περσικίσουσι δὲ τὸ πλείονος τοῦτο Φοινίκης Τυρίοι. Καλεῖται δὲ ὁ ἕως αὐτοῦ ὁ συναπταῖς Τυρίων στρατόπεδον.* The Phenicians of Tyre dwell in its vicinity (Memphis), and indeed the whole of the place is called the Tyrian Camp.

nus showed to obtain possession of it ; or from the accounts given by various independent authors ; or, finally, from the splendid monuments which adorned their capital, and which might be compared in point of magnificence with those of Egypt and India.*

Petra, the metropolis of the descendants of Esau, shared in the decay and desolation which the wars of Syria, the vicissitudes of the Roman empire, and the rise of the Mohammedan dynasty, inflicted upon most of the cities whose prosperity was founded upon foreign commerce. The proud capital of the Nabatheans, built in the heart of a mountain, seemed calculated by its strength and position to bid defiance to every power except that of time : but the solemn prophecy of Jeremiah was at length fulfilled—" Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill ; though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord."†

Many centuries passed during which no tidings reached Europe respecting that city of rocks which had risen to so much eminence before Judah was carried away captive, and of which the remains display the towering grandeur of Thebes combined with the laborious excavations of Western India. In our own days it has been visited by several intelligent travellers, the result of whose researches are in the hands of the public. The latest of these authors remarks, that in approaching the narrow ravine, the only entrance to Petra,

* Laborde's *Journey through Arabia Petræa*, p. 269. Diod. Sic. lib. xix. c. 94. The description of the mode of life and manners followed by the Nabatheans, given by this historian, corresponds exactly with that of the Rechabites as delineated by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xxxv.

† Jeremiah xlix. 10—17, " I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself.—Edom shall be a desolation ; every one that goeth by it shall be astonished."

the stranger discovers “ within his horizon the most singular spectacle, the most enchanting picture which nature has wrought in her grandest mood of creation, which men, influenced by the vainest dreams of ambition, have yet bequeathed to the generations that were to follow them. At Palmyra, nature renders the works of man insignificant by her own immensity and her boundless horizon, within which some hundreds of columns seem entirely lost ; here, on the contrary, she appears delighted to set in her own noble framework his productions which aspire, and not unsuccessfully, to harmonize with her own majestic yet fantastical appearance. The spectator hesitates for a moment as to which of the two he is the more to admire ; whether he is to accord the preference to nature who invites his attention to her matchless girdle of rocks, wondrous as well for their colours as their forms, or to the men who feared not to intermingle the works of their genius with such splendid efforts of creative power.”*

The approach to this deserted metropolis is through an opening in the mountain, so narrow, dark, and deep, that it has the appearance of a simple fissure occasioned by a natural convulsion in the rocky mass. In some places, the opposite sides of the cleft are so near each other at the top, and the gigantic wall so perpendicular, that the rays of light can hardly find their way to the path whereon the travellers advance. In the bosom of this retreat, every where else surrounded by lofty precipices, a town is seen, consisting of splendid palaces, theatres, triumphal arches, and, above all, of stately sepulchres, hewn out of the solid rock. An unfinished excavation affords a key to the plan which was pursued in the construction of the other monuments. The rock was at first cut down in a perpendicular direction, leav-

* Laborde, p. 149.

ing buttresses on each side, which preserved their original form. The front, which was thus made smooth, was next marked out, according to the style of architecture adopted for the purpose ; and then the capitals of the columns were fashioned. Thus the monuments of Petra, so peculiar in their appearance, and so different in many respects from other ruins of antiquity, are still more strongly characterized by the extraordinary mode in which they were constructed ; the workmen beginning at the top and ending at the bottom. It was in fact necessary to proceed in that way, by separating from the rock the upper part of the column in the first instance, allowing the weight of the material to rest on the ground until the edifice was completed.

A small river or brook, the Wady Mousa, passes along the depth of the ravine, and is in most places walled in with strong buildings so as to prevent its inundating the only portion of level ground which the inhabitants could command. They endeavoured, indeed, to extend it as much as possible, in order to construct upon it a continuation of their forum, or rather a grand avenue bordered on each side by sumptuous monuments. Hence the stream flowed under a vaulted covering, and the square extended over both banks, the pavement being formed of large slabs. The vast number of tombs and temples which were to be seen from that position, all round the horizon, must have presented a most magnificent spectacle when Petra was in its glory ! At one point, where the Mousa retires again into a narrow dell, is to be seen a large theatre, in the bosom of the mountain, surrounded and in some degree sheltered by the rocks ; an enterprise of infinite labour, considering that the whole was scooped out of a solid rock. The benches, though worn by use and by the waters which dash upon them from the heights, are nevertheless so well preserved as to permit an accurate plan to be taken of the interior. The situation of the

stage may be easily ascertained ; and there are still several bases of columns, the original intention of which it is not difficult to conjecture.

The sole entrance to Petra, it has been already remarked, is by a confined ravine, a cleft as it were in the body of the mountain, produced doubtless by some interior movement of the strata, and afterwards completed by the action of torrents which have formed similar channels in many parts of Arabia Petrea. The natural conformation of the valley and of this opening to it sufficiently explains the cause of its having been selected as a convenient site for a town. In remote ages, when men were engaged in perpetual wars, and when plunder was accounted one of the ordinary means of supporting life, it was no small advantage to a community to find a position which presented a considerable surface enriched by an abundant stream and hemmed in by a rampart of rocks, to which there was no ingress except through a crevice so narrow that a few men, stationed on the top of the hill, might prevent any enemy, however numerous, from effecting a lodgement within their walls. When the Nabatheans became a powerful people, the value of their natural fortifications appeared still more manifest ; because they had to guard themselves not only against the jealousy of the neighbouring tribes, but also against the desire of conquest which might call forth an attack from a more distant quarter.*

* “What a people,” exclaims M. Laborde, “must they not have been, who thus opened the mountain to stamp upon it the seal of their energy and genius ! What a climate, too, which gilds with its light the graceful forms of a great variety of sculptures, without suffering its winters to crumble their sharp edges, or to reduce in the least their high reliefs ! Silence reigns all around, save when the solitary owl now and then utters his plaintive cry. The Arab passes through the scene with perfect indifference, scarcely deigning to look on works executed with so much ability, or to meditate, except with contempt, upon the uselessness of so much labour expended on an object which he in vain seeks to comprehend.”—P. 168.

Amongst the wonders which modern adventure has brought to light in that city of the dead is a temple or sepulchre, called by the wandering Arabs the castle or treasury of Pharaoh. This monument, we are told, is sculptured out of an enormous block of compact sandstone, slightly tinged with oxide of iron. It is only however by means of drawings that the reader can be enabled to form any notion of this magnificent edifice, or rather immense bass relief, carved out of the living rock ; though it is acknowledged to be impossible to convey to the mind of any one who has not visited Petra a just impression of the magical effect produced on the eye by the harmonious tints of the stone of which the structure is composed, standing out as it does in a limpid rosy hue, detached from the sombre colour of the mountain. It is not in the power of art to represent those traces of ancient grandeur which characterize this fine picture, placed in the great avenue to the city that it might be seen of all, in contrast with the solitude of the desolate glen which seems calculated to heighten its effect. Its preservation is due to the shelter which the projecting cliffs afford against the winds and rain. The statues and the bases of the columns alone exhibit signs of deterioration, caused by the humidity which corrodes the parts that are most in relief or nearest to the earth. At a little distance a grand triumphal arch, erected over the ravine, boldly spans the two lofty walls of rock on each side. The ravine itself at this point presents the image of a fine avenue, created by nature, and improved to magnificence by the skill and industry of man. The savage wildness of the situation has no parallel ; and, combined with the view of this architectural splendour, the impression it produces on the thoughtful mind cannot be conveyed in the best-chosen words.*

* Buckhardt, the celebrated traveller, gives the following account of this sepulchre :—" After proceeding for twenty-five minutes between the rocks, we

The decline of Petra may no doubt be traced to the policy of the Assyrian monarchs, who saw the advantage of drawing the commerce of the Persian gulf from its wonted tracts across the Arabian desert, and giving it a new direction, in the line of the Euphrates, through the principal cities of their empire towards the shores of the Mediterranean. The same cause affected the prosperity of Palmyra, as well as of other towns on the verge of the wilderness. There are magnificent ruins, scarcely less remarkable than those of Tadmor itself, to be seen in the eastern part of

came to a place where the passage opens, and where the bed of another stream coming from the south joins the Syk. On the side of the perpendicular rock, directly opposite to the issue of the main valley, an excavated mausoleum came in view, the situation and beauty of which are calculated to make an extraordinary impression upon the traveller, after having traversed for nearly half an hour such a gloomy and almost subterraneous passage as I have described. It is one of the most elegant remains of antiquity existing in Syria: its state of preservation resembles that of a building recently finished; and, on a closer examination, I found it to be a work of immense labour.

“The principal part is a chamber sixteen paces square, and about twenty-five feet high. There is not the smallest ornament on the walls, which are quite smooth as well as the roof; but the outside of the entrance-door is richly embellished with architectural decorations. Several broad steps lead up to the entrance; and in front of all is a colonnade of four pillars standing between two pilasters. On each of the three sides of the great chamber is an apartment for the reception of the dead. A similar excavation, but larger, opens into each end of the vestibule, the length of which latter is not equal to that of the colonnade as it appears in front, but terminates at either end between the pilaster and the neighbouring columns. The doors of the two apartments opening into the vestibule are covered with carvings richer and more beautiful than those on the door of the principal chamber. The colonnade is about thirty-five feet high, and the columns are about three feet in diameter, with Corinthian capitals. The pilasters at the two extremities of the colonnade, and the two columns nearest to them, are formed out of the solid rock, like all the rest of the monument; but the centre columns, one of which has fallen, were constructed separately, and composed of three pieces each. The colonnade is crowned with a pediment, above which are other ornaments, which, if I distinguished them correctly, consisted of an insulated cylinder crowned with a vase, standing between other structures in the shape of small temples, supported by short pilasters. The entire front, from the base of the columns to the top of the ornaments, may be sixty or sixty-five feet. The architrave of the colonnade is adorned with vases, connected together with festoons. All the other ornaments sculptured on the monument are in perfect preservation.”—*Travels in Syria*, pp. 424, 425.

Palestine, formerly called Decapolis, beyond Jordan and the Dead sea. Of these remains, the most striking are found at the ancient Gerasa, Gadara, and Philadelphia ; at the first of which places are a temple and portico, together with an amphitheatre. If it be asked how these cities, on the very margin of the sandy waste, could arrive at such splendour, opulence, and luxury, the same causes may be assigned which contributed to the elevation of Palmyra. They are all situated on the direct road which led from Petra, the principal emporium of Arabian commerce, to Damascus and its dependencies ; they flourished in the same age, and their architectural remains exhibit the same character.

No doubt remains as to the fact that the Babylonians, actuated by feelings of mercantile jealousy, wished to drive the Phenicians from the Persian gulf, and to intercept the flourishing trade the latter had long enjoyed through the medium of the caravan-stations in the desert. The destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar is understood to have had for its main object the restriction of Indian commerce to the sea and rivers which water the southern coasts of his dominions ; and by these means to secure for the benefit of his subjects an undivided traffic with the Grecian isles and the powerful kingdoms which were then beginning to raise their heads on both sides of the Mediterranean. With this view he constructed or designed large works near Babylon, including two canals, the Harmacales and the Aracanus ; built large sluices ; confined the waters of the Tigris by a dam ; and erected the city of Tenedon as a defence against the incursions of the Arabs. This town, situated a little above the mouth of the Pasitigris, became a considerable emporium ; and down to the age of Nearchus afforded an abundant market for Indian productions.*

* Periplus of the Erythrean Sea. Vincent's Works, vol. ii. p. 356. Sea-

The foundation of Palmyra, it has been already mentioned, was laid in the days of Solomon, who spared no expense on its beauty and fortifications. It may have previously existed as a mere station for caravans, such as those which were conducted by the Midianites some centuries before the birth of Moses ; but it was not until the reign of the munificent prince just named that its rank as a royal city was recognised. Petra and the towns eastward of the Jordan were probably not less ancient, though the inscriptions found in all of them might seem to betray a more recent origin. To explain this circumstance, nothing more is necessary than to state that Syria and Egypt fell successively into the hands of the Grecian kings who owed their sceptre to the conquests of the Macedonian prince, and of the Roman emperors who overthrew the thrones of Antioch and Alexandria ; that both Greeks and Latins, during their ascendancy in those vast provinces, bestowed a partial repair on the principal edifices ; that they introduced their own style of architecture ; and in every case left some literary memorial to perpetuate the remembrance of their power.*

It must have occurred to the reader that the excavations at Petra not only prove a very remote antiquity, but also afford evidence that its first inhabitants were an oriental people, accustomed to the usages of the Troglodyte families

liger, de Emendatione Temporum, containing a fragment of Abydenus. Heeren's Researches, vol. ii. p. 416.

* Palmyra even in the time of Pliny was a magnificent place. " Palmyra, urbis nobilis situ, divitiis soli, et aquis amenis, vasto undique ambitu arenis includit agros, ac velut terris exempta a rerum natura privata sorte, inter duo imperia summa Romanorum Parthorumque ; et prima in discordia semper utrimque cura."—*Hist. Nat.* lib. v. c. 25.

In the same accurate writer we find an account of Petra.—" Nabatai, Arabiæ populus, oppidum includunt, Petram nomine, in convalle paulo minus duorum millium passuum amplitudinis, circumdatum montibus inaccessis annæ interfluente. Abest a Gaza, oppido littoris nostri, 600 m. p. ; a sinu Persico 122 m. p. Huc convenit utrimque civium eorum qui Syriæ Palmyram petiere, et eorum qui a Gaza venerant."—*Lib. vi. c. 28* ; edit. 1549.

who first occupied the borders of the Nile and the hilly shores of the Red sea. Similar monuments, which still meet the eye of the traveller in Cyrene, lead to similar conclusions as to the genealogy of the tribes who originally occupied that portion of the African continent. The most sumptuous of their edifices were attached to immense excavations in the mountains, of which the object in some instances appears to have been a depository for the dead ; in others, a palace for the living. Several are adorned in front with a monolithic portico and an open hall ; and one is distinguished by a handsome staircase, cut in the solid rock, and decorated with an arched roof of mason-work.*

But to return to the Hebrews, whose commercial transactions on the Red sea have suggested the remarks contained in the preceding paragraphs, it ought to be observed that, besides trading to Ophir, they fitted out ships for Tarshish, which, as well as those bound to the former port, took their departure from Elath or Ezion-geber. The difficulty of fixing the precise position of the gold-country has been already mentioned, though the weight of evidence is decidedly in favour of Yemen, or, in more general terms, the southern emporia of Arabia Felix. The name being descriptive, as ancient names usually are, might be applied to

* Many interesting details are given in the work of M. Pacho, entitled "*Voyage dans la Marnarique*," p. 193, &c. In a ravine beyond the western limits of the city (Cyrene), he discovered an excavation, which, in point of magnitude and beauty, surpassed all that he had examined in any other quarter. It appears to be situated about half-way between the bottom of the dell and the level of the plain above, from both of which there are regular approaches cut with infinite care. Having entered the cavern, he found himself in a vast quadrangle surrounded with a low bench. At the farther end is a square altar, above which is a larger niche, designed, as he imagined, to receive the statue of the presiding deity. It would seem that the place was an excavated temple, consecrated probably to one of the powerful divinities of Cyrene, and that strangers came to visit it in the discharge of a sacred duty. There are many inscriptions ; but it may be seen at the first glance that they belong to very different epochs.

several places agreeing in their produce and the qualities of their climate ; and it is accordingly found that there was an Ophir also on the eastern shore, as well as one in the region of Bahrein on the Persian gulf.*

On the ground now explained, Tarshish has been considered as a descriptive term applicable to several places in the Arabian sea as well as on the coast of Spain : and as this opinion has been adopted by writers of great eminence in Britain, France, and Germany, it may not be unseasonable to state shortly the basis on which it rests.

In the twenty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, where the commerce of the ancients is minutely described, Tarshish is twice mentioned in connection with Tyre, whose downfall is announced by the prophet. “ Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches ; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs.—The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market ; and thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas.” But notwithstanding the frequent recurrence of the term, and the familiar manner in which it is used, it still remains to be determined what Tarshish is ; whether it means any thing more than the sea considered in the abstract ; or, if it denotes a place, to decide upon its situation. Bochart has no doubt that it is Tartessus in Spain, where lead and silver were procured in abundance. Be this as it may, it is evident, by the articles mentioned, that the voyage must have been towards the west, and whether it was to Andalusia or the coast of Britain, is quite immaterial. The greatest difficulty arises from this circumstance, that while Solomon and Jehoshaphat had ships of Tarshish in the Red sea, Jonah puts

* Ophir in the Arabic language signifies “ rich countries.”—*Tychen de Commercio Hebræorum*, in *Commentat. Soc. Gött.* vol. xvi. p. 164, quoted by Heeren.

himself on board a vessel at Joppa, in the Mediterranean, “to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.”*

It is the opinion of Gosselin, adopted by Dr Vincent, that Tarshish means the sea in general; and in support of this view they quote the twenty-second chapter of the First Book of the Kings, where it is said that “Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold.” In the Vulgate, the term in question is rendered Carthage; but silver, tin, and lead are not produced in that part of Africa. The Septuagint translate it Chalcedon, which is a city on the Bosphorus, proceeding on the idea that the original word denotes a precious stone. This version, singular as it may appear, will perhaps guide us to the true meaning of the contested expression. Tarshish is one of the jewels in the breastplate of the high-priest, which Lamy concludes to be the chrysolite or topaz; but he adds that some suppose it to be the aigue-marine, or stone which is the colour of sea-water, and that in this sense Tarshish the jewel is applied to Tarshish the sea. If this interpretation can be justified, it will reconcile every passage in Scripture from the twenty-eighth chapter of Exodus, where it first occurs, down to the latest mention of it in the writings of the prophets. It is remarkable, too, that Tyre is called the “daughter of Tarshish;” a use of the epithet which could only apply to that element whence she seemed to rise, and from which she derived her nourishment.†

* Jonah i. 3.

† Lamy's Commentaries, p. 431. Dr Vincent's Dissertation on the 27th chapter of Ezekiel, p. 654. Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon, on תַּרְשִׁישׁ. As this word is derived from תָּר to turn or go about, from which we have, 1 Kings x. 15, תַּרְשִׁישִׁים *merchantmen* or *chapmen*, it has occurred to me that the “ships of Tarshish” might on this principle be called merchant-ships; such, namely, as made *trading voyages*. The same verb in Kal signifies *to go about in searching, to investigate, explore, search out*; and hence the ships of Tarshish might also be regarded as vessels employed in discovering new seats of commerce. Parkhurst says (on what ground it is not apparent) that

But amidst the ambiguity inseparable from a name the particular import of which is obscured by the darkness of a remote age, there is one place whither the eyes of commentators have turned with more unanimity than usual, and marked as the only Tarshish to which ships sailing in the Mediterranean could have directed their course, namely, the Tartessus already mentioned, a station not far from the modern Cadiz, where the metals mentioned by Ezekiel were procured by the eastern dealers. Jonah, the fugitive prophet, found at Joppa a ship bound for that quarter; whence we are supplied with an indirect though satisfactory proof of a participation in this trade by his countrymen the Jews. Heeren remarks that Spain, which in modern days has been compelled to fetch her treasures from the other side of the Atlantic, was herself the Peru of antiquity. She was the richest country in the world for silver, while she abounded in gold and the less precious ores. The prodigious quantity of these metals which the navigators of Tyre found upon their first arrival excited their utmost astonishment; and it is reported that they not only loaded their ships with them, but employed them in the manufacture of the commonest utensils.

It is well known that the Phenicians were induced by such tokens of natural wealth to found a colony in Spain, where they first appeared as traders, and afterwards as sovereigns. Having the command of slaves, the strangers, it is probable, did not employ the compulsory labour of the natives, whose ignorance might for a time protect them from servitude. The mines, it is thought, did not extend beyond

“ships of Tarshish” mean large strong ships fit to sail from India to Tarshish (Jonah i. 3), or to undertake the like distant voyage.

See also Gosselin's *Recherches sur la Géographie des Anciens*, where this subject is discussed at considerable length. He shows that, in the great majority of instances where Tarshish is used, it may be translated *sea*, and that not only the Vulgate but other ancient versions have adopted the same view.

the limits of the province of Andalusia. According to Strabo, the most ancient of them were situated upon the mountain in which the Bætis or Guadalquiver takes its rise ; beyond which point they seem not to have been carried until the Carthaginians invaded the peninsula, and entered upon the conquest of it with greater energy and power.

But, besides the direct advantages which the merchants of Tyre drew from their Spanish colonies, they also found in them the means of extending their transactions in the Atlantic ocean, and perhaps in the North sea. Gades was not only the staple for the treasures and other produce raised in the country ; it was, moreover, the point whence they started in pursuit of that more distant commerce over which they have contrived to throw so thick a veil of secrecy, that no effort on the part of modern geographers has been able either to remove or to penetrate its folds. It is manifest, however, that from this port their vessels were fitted out for the tin-islands and the amber-coasts ; but where those markets were situated can now only be made a subject of conjecture, because, as they wished to preclude all competition in articles so extremely valuable, they studiously concealed their maritime routes, whether to the south or the north. The best writers on this subject concur in the opinion that they steered towards Cornwall on the one hand, and the Baltic on the other ; loading their ships with tin at the British mines, and bartering with the simple natives on the shores of Prussia for amber, esteemed by these foreigners as worth its weight in gold. Against this conclusion no argument can be drawn from the difficulty of the enterprise ; for the mariners of Tyre and Sidon held no voyage to be impossible which courage could undertake, or to which the art of navigation could be applied. It is even imagined that they stretched out as far as Madeira and the Canary islands ; but of these discoveries, if they were actually made

in the era of Solomon, the traditions transmitted to us are so extremely faint as not to warrant any decided inference.*

As commerce at a certain period is the most convenient link by which the histories of different countries are connected together, no apology can be necessary for the details just given, illustrating the intercourse which took place in ancient times between the nations on the western border of Asia and those in the east. The earliest acquaintance, too, that can be obtained with the south of Europe and the northern parts of Africa, must be derived from the annals of merchandise. It is in vain that we search in the classical authors of Greece and Rome for any knowledge respecting the inhabitants of either shore, at an era prior to the voyages of the Tyrian ships to Tartessus or the settlement of a Sidonian colony at Carthage. Those writers took more delight in gratifying their imaginations with splendid fictions than in storing their minds with facts. In particular, Africa appeared to them much in the same light as India and China did to the European chroniclers of the Middle Ages; for, while they crowded it with wonders of magnificence and splendour, they introduced into it all the monstrous and most terrific productions of nature. A tradition had reached their ears that a mixed horde of Asiatics, led by the fabled hero Hercules, after advancing to the straits which divide the Mediterranean from the Atlantic where they lost their chief, sought employment for their arms against the natives of the southern coast, with whom they afterwards incorporated. The Persians, it is moreover said, upon landing on the desert shore, inverted their barks and used them for dwellings; supplying, as the historian suggests, a pattern for the Numidian cottages, even as they existed in his own days.†

* Historical Researches into the Politics, Intercourse, and Trade of the principal Nations of Antiquity, vol. ii. p. 63—65.

† Sallust. Bell. Jugurth. c. 18.

Procopius has vouched for the truth of a legend still more ancient, and assures his readers, that in the time of the war with the Vandals, when, in quality of secretary, he accompanied the great Belisarius into Africa, there were to be seen, at a fountain near Tangier, two columns of white stone, whereon were inscribed in the Phenician tongue the following words: "We flee from the robber Joshua, the son of Nun." Whatever accuracy there may be in this statement, there is no doubt that the northern parts of the African continent were peopled by emigrants from Asia. If any confidence can be placed in those traditionary records, which, descending from father to son, constitute the history of all barbarous nations, it must be believed that successive multitudes, armed and unarmed, sought, in the less populous countries which stretch out on either side of what they denominated the Great sea, a refuge from the tyranny of Asiatic conquerors.

The Moors maintain that their origin may be traced to Sabea, a district in Yemen, whence their ancestors, under their king Ifricki, were expelled by a superior force, and reduced to the necessity of seeking a new home in the remote regions of the West. This inroad, which could not be accomplished without violence, drove the older inhabitants from the vicinity of the coast into the less fertile tracts that skirt the desert; whereupon they appear to have provided for their defence by forming caves in the mountains after the oriental fashion, as well as by erecting fortresses in strong passes and ravines. Even at the present day there are found in southern Numidia the remains of towns and castles, which present an air of very great antiquity. The Arabs, disdaining the protection of walls and the restraint of a sedentary life, carried into Africa their wonted habits: preferring the moveable tent to the "city which hath foundations," and watching their numerous flocks over unlimited pastures, rather than submit to the drudgery of agriculture or of

manufactures. The earlier inhabitants appear to have been less erratic in their mode of life, and, like the Egyptians, with whom it is probable they were originally connected, fond of excavating dwellings in the rocks, and of erecting lofty structures for ornament or safety. Hence it is obvious that the ruins to which allusion has been made, as existing in the interior of Morocco, must represent buildings formed by a people older than the Sabeian colony, and who are supposed to have been driven by these last from their native seats.*

But whoever were the aboriginal possessors of Africa, it is confirmed by the general voice of history that the Phenicians, about nine hundred years before the Christian era, founded a variety of establishments along its shores. The narrow territory on the Asiatic coast occupied by this enterprising people, who had already carried their trade to all parts of the known world, soon suggested the expediency of removing the superabundant population to less crowded countries. Political broils on many occasions produced the same effect; sending the disaffected from the parent state to seek an abode at a distance, where their opinions could not be so strictly watched, and where their impatient spirits would be freed from the control of an imperious master. But other motives, unconnected either with commerce or civil liberty, might also operate in withdrawing inhabitants from the Phenician monarchy. Carthage, the most powerful of their settlements, according to a tradition the truth of which there is no reason to question, owed its origin to the crime of a king of Tyre, who, urged by avarice or ambition, murdered his brother-in-law, the priest of Melcarth their national god. Many of the citizens, offended and alarmed by this atrocity, resolved to leave their native land; and placing themselves under Elissa, the widow of the

slaughtered prince, they put to sea, and directed their course towards Africa. They disembarked in the bay in which Utica and Tuneta were already built; and fixing on a narrow promontory which runs out into the sea, they agreed to pay for it a price, or perhaps an annual tribute, to the Libyans, who claimed the property of the soil. Here they erected a place of defence, to which they gave the name of Betzura, the fort or stronghold, but which the Greeks, according to their usual practice, changed into Byrsa, a term referable to their own tongue; and as this word, so interpreted, denotes the skin of a bullock, they invented the popular tale describing how the Tyrians imposed upon the unsuspecting savages in the bargain for their first possession.*

From the beginning Carthage was an independent state, after the model of the trading towns which were peopled along the Phenician coast. Tyre and her colony, without claiming dominion or acknowledging subjection, observed towards one another that mutual regard which, in those early times, was expected between communities sprung from the same root. The former, as Herodotus observes, constantly refused to Cambyses the use of her fleet whenever he wished to attack the city of Dido; and the latter granted

* Appian, in Lybicus. The word Betzura, Bitzra, or Bozrah, is of Hebrew etymology, and signifies a fort, rock, or castle. It is one of the names of Petra, the Idumean capital, and chief town in the country of Edom. —Isaiah lxiii. 1.

The legend of the ox-hide seems to have gone round the world. Hussun Subah, the leader of the assassins, is said to have acquired in the same manner the hill-fort of Allahamout. The Persians maintain that the British got Calcutta in the same way. An English tradition avers that it was by a similar trick Hengist and Horsa got a settlement in the isle of Thanet; and it is somewhere stated, that this was the mode by which one of our colonies in America obtained their land from the Indians.

The eastern origin of the story, which Virgil has decorated with all the beauties of poetical language, is manifest from the name of the heroine Dido, derived from דוד or דיד, the beloved: the same root which supplies David, a noun of the very same import. David and Dido are respectively the masculine and the feminine forms.

a place of refuge to the inhabitants of Tyre when that metropolis was besieged by Alexander the Great. She appears likewise to have continued long towards her neighbours that pacific policy which her original condition rendered expedient. Built on the margin of an extensive continent, peopled by fierce and lawless tribes, she endeavoured to maintain a good understanding with such of them as occupied the adjoining territory ; and it is reported that the rent which she consented to yield to those who claimed the right of the soil was regularly paid, down to the reign of Darius Hystaspes. There are, no doubt, in the earliest history of her citizens, unquestionable proofs that she departed from this amicable policy as soon as she found herself sufficiently strong to dispute the pretensions of the Libyan princes, and even had recourse to arms in order to vindicate her independence or to extend her borders. Opposed to uncivilized hordes, the Carthaginian generals usually crowned their efforts with success ; though it is admitted that, by their conquests, they only obtained subjects who embraced every opportunity to throw off the yoke.

It would appear that the Africans were indebted to the Tyrian colonists for the important knowledge of agriculture, which in all ages has proved the main source of civilisation and social improvement. In the time of Herodotus, the most flourishing era of the Carthaginian state, no people who cultivated land was to be found beyond the limits of their territory ; all the native tribes between Egypt and the Lesser Syrtis being still in the more primitive condition of shepherds, removing from place to place as the exigencies of their flocks required. But the historian remarks, immediately to the westward “ we find nations who till the ground.” Of these he specifies the Maxyces, who alleged that they were sprung from the Trojans. Their country, and indeed all the western parts of Libya, are described as

being much more woody, and infested to a greater degree with wild beasts, than those districts which the pastoral tribes inhabit ; for the abode of these last, in proportion as it stretches to the eastward, becomes lower and more sandy. From hence, he continues, towards the west, where those dwell who plough the land, the region is mountainous, full of trees, and abounding with ferocious animals. Here are found serpents of an enormous size, lions, elephants, bears, asps, and asses with horns.*

During several centuries the history of Carthage comprehended that of the whole of Northern Africa, the scanty remains of which can now only be gleaned from the earliest volumes of the Greek and Latin authors. It is much to be regretted, that all the works of native writers have perished ; having fallen a prey to various accidents, as well perhaps as to the neglect of their haughty conquerors, who had no desire that the gallant efforts of a falling state should be recorded by a less partial pen than their own. We learn, however, from the annals of Josephus, and also from a few incidental notices in the Sacred Scriptures, that about six hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Carthaginians had obtained such a degree of power as to brave the resentment of the king of Babylon. This monarch, it has been already mentioned, laid siege to Tyre, which, after an investment of thirteen years, he reduced to submission ; but he did not accomplish this object without encountering the arms of the African colonists, who sent both sea and land forces to assist their mother-country.†

No records are left which might enable the historian at this distant period to determine the extent to which they carried their triumphs over the natives, or what were the

* Herodot. Melpomene, c. 186—193.

† Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. i. Ezekiel, chapters xxvi. xxvii. xxviii. xxix. The details given by the prophet, in his 27th chapter, throw more light on the trade of Tyre than can now be obtained from any other quarter.

conditions proposed to the vanquished, regarded as vassals of the rising republic. Those who imagine that they subdued all Barbary, or indeed any considerable part of it, are chargeable with a great mistake ; though some writers have gone so far as to assert, that the whole of the north having submitted to their sway, the Mauritanian princes consented to receive their diadem from the senate of Carthage. No Latin author warrants the conclusion that they were at any time masters of more land than what constituted the province usually associated with their name, together with the principal harbours between the eastern confines of Tripoli and the shores of the Atlantic. There is besides good reason to infer, that in ordinary circumstances their authority did not extend much beyond the walls of their seaport-towns, especially of those which, more with the view of pursuing commerce than of extending their dominions, they had been permitted to erect within the boundaries of Numidia.*

Proceeding now to make a few remarks on the commercial relations of this famous commonwealth, which sprung into existence a short time after the separation of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, we may observe, that trade and navigation are in all cases so intimately connected as to render it very difficult to consider them apart. In the present case, however, a distinction must be made between the maritime transactions of the Carthaginians and the dealings which they carried on with Egypt, Ethiopia, and even Arabia Felix, by means of caravans.

In the Mediterranean, this celebrated daughter of Tyre succeeded to a large portion of the commerce which was originally enjoyed by the parent-state ; and in some respects her position was more favourable for such intercourse with

* Heeren's *Reflections on the Politics, Intercourse, and Trade of the Ancient Nations of Africa*, vol. i. p. 53.

Africa, Western Europe, and the large islands which stretch towards the shores of each, than was that of the Phenician ports themselves. With a view to create a demand for her manufactures, she formed settlements in Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and the whole Balearic group. This step became the more necessary to her, because, though she kept up a correspondence with the Syrian coast as well as with Greece, Egypt, and the Pentapolis, she appears not at any time to have enjoyed a large share of trade in those parts. Among these ancient nations, where competition prevailed to no small extent, she could not fail to encounter many rivals ; on which account her rulers wisely endeavoured to secure an exclusive traffic with the less polished tribes who occupied the western coasts of their inland sea. Even this object was not accomplished without opposition ; for a Greek colony, planted in the south of Gaul, claimed the trade of that vast province, while other establishments, not less jealous, asserted a previous right to whatever profit might accrue from buying and selling among the merchants of Magna Græcia and of Spain.

It was, notwithstanding, to the countries just named that her mercantile navigation was first directed. Her traders settled at an early period in Syracuse, as well as in other Greek cities, whose harbours were always full of their ships ; while, in recompense, these rich districts found the Carthaginians their best customers for oil and wine, which these last again disposed of at Cyrene, in exchange for commodities still more highly prized. The articles exported from Africa were black slaves, precious stones, gold, and manufactures. Malta, which belonged to Carthage, soon became celebrated for the beautiful cloths it produced ; Lipara and its dependencies, which owned the same government, supplied an abundance of resin, then esteemed very valuable ; Corsica was celebrated for its wax ; and Elba enjoyed a

high reputation, arising from its inexhaustible stores of iron, which were imagined to grow under the hand of the miner.

Their intercourse with the Atlantic shores of Africa would necessarily make the Carthaginians acquainted with some of those numerous islands which lie scattered in the ocean. Diodorus accordingly relates, that the Phenicians, a name which he frequently applies without distinction to the original people and their colonies, discovered an island after a sail of many days westward from Libya; the glowing description he gives of which recalls to the recollection of the reader the idea of such happy clusters as have been occasionally visited in the South sea, where summer always prevails, where the trees are ever green, and where the wants of the inhabitants are supplied by the spontaneous gifts of nature. All that he mentions, as to its situation, its streams and rivers, its productions, its fruits, and its foliage, applies to no other island so well as to Madeira.*

It would appear that the expeditions under Hanno and Hamilco took place about 500 years before the reign of Augustus Cæsar,—a time when Carthage enjoyed the blessing of a profound peace. A fleet of sixty large ships, each propelled by fifty oars, denotes the power of a prosperous state. Another proof of her advancement in the arts and enjoyments of social life is the attention already paid by her citizens to the interests of literature. Pliny relates, that when the Romans overthrew the capital, they gave the libraries found there to their allies the Numidians; a circumstance which throws some light upon the manner in which the works of the Carthaginian historians had come into the possession of King Hiempsal.† The tracts of Mago alone,

* Diodor. Sicul. lib. v. c. 19. Fest. Avien. Ora Maritima, v. 164. Heeren's Historical Researches, vol. i. p. 173, &c.

† Sallust, Jugurth. c. 17, mentions the Punic Books, "qui regis Hiempsalis dicebantur."

one of the kings or suffetes, extending to twenty-eight books, were translated into Latin by Solinus; some fragments of which, preserved by the distinguished writer to whom we owe our knowledge of this fact, are sufficient to show that the royal author treated fully of all kinds of husbandry, agriculture, planting, breeding of stock, and the improvement of fruit-trees. It cannot then be doubted, even if the mention of libraries were not itself a proof, that there was a Carthaginian literature; that it was patronized by the great; and had already passed from the romance of poetry, the first composition of all rude nations, into the more didactic form of prose.*

But, notwithstanding the enlightened condition to which they had attained, it is manifest that the spirit of monopoly was a chief element in the Carthaginian laws, as is proved by their commercial restrictions, and especially from their practice of drowning the crews of such vessels belonging to other nations as were found in the vicinity of those places with which they carried on the more lucrative branches of traffic. This ardent rivalry has been assigned as the main cause why their trade was not more extensive in the eastern parts of the Mediterranean, where they could not have escaped a very active competition with the older dealers.

Allusion has already been made to the land-trade of Carthage, which, by means of caravans, she appears to have pushed far into the east, the south, and the west. Herodotus, whose knowledge of ancient Africa was much more complete than hasty critics are wont to imagine, has traced with much precision the routes of the merchant-travellers from the neighbourhood of the Syrtes to Fezzan, Ammonium, Thebes, the regions of the Joliba, and even the borders of the western Sahara. No difficulties, however great, no dan-

gers, however appalling, can check the avarice or damp the courage of man, when wealth, conquest, or revenge becomes the motive of his actions. Gold, precious stones, spices, dates, salt, and slaves, were the objects upon which the Phenician colonists placed the greatest value, and to obtain which they consented to undergo the most painful toils, and encounter the most frightful hazards that a wilderness, many hundred miles in extent, parched by the sun, disturbed by moving sands, and destitute of water, could present to the imagination.*

Great labour and ingenuity have been expended by modern authors on the attempt to illustrate the route by which the commerce of Arabia, Ethiopia, and of Egypt, was conducted across the African desert to the southern coast of the Mediterranean. Thebes was the point from which the caravans started ; and the temple of Jupiter Ammon was the first station at which they halted ; being at once a sanctuary to the faith of the religious pilgrim, and an asylum for his trade to the more secular merchant. In fact, the ancient Ammonium was not a mere temple, but a small state founded in common by the Egyptians and Ethiopians, who invested the chief with a species of sovereign power. Its origin, as well as its extensive population in former times, are still indicated by the number of catacombs and the remains of mummies : and the construction of the fane, including the whole plan of the building, agrees exactly with the style which prevailed in the country of the Pharaohs.

Leaving the lofty palms and sacred groves of Ammon, the caravan would soon lose sight of all traces of vegetation and of animated nature. The southern desert of Barca, interrupted only by barren hills, forthwith opens its arid plains ; through which, when the journey has continued ten days,

* Herodot. lib. iv. c. 181—185.

the date-trees of Augela at length appear, and the weary camels again reach one of those fertile islands which Nature has sprinkled with so sparing a hand over the dreary waste. This station, not remarkable either for its extent or any remains of antiquity, is still regularly visited by the trading companies who frequent the route from Western Africa to the modern capital of Egypt. The next tribe whose territory was approached by the wayfaring merchant were the Garamantes, now represented by the inhabitants of Fezzan, the Phazania of classical authors, upon whose habits much light has been thrown during the last thirty years. In this case we find again that the resting-place of the ancients was the same which the caravans from Cairo and Soudan use at the present day. Near Zucla, one of the principal villages, springs of good water still flow in abundance to refresh the driver and his weary beast ; although for other reasons the chief seat of business has been removed to Mourzouk.

It is the opinion of Heeren that, as the distance from Augela to Fezzan is too great to be accomplished in ten days, —the period assigned by Herodotus,—there must have been an oasis between them, where repose and nourishment might be procured. He has accordingly fixed upon Zala, where there is a watered and fertile valley, which Horneman reached nine days after he left Fezzan. But whether this or any other solution may be adopted, there is no doubt as to the line of march pursued by the ancient caravans from the Nile to the western parts of the Mediterranean. From Zucla one road branched off towards the north leading to the neighbourhood of the Syrtes, while another stretched along the northern edge of the desert in the direction of Mauritania and the shores of the Atlantic.*

The research of the learned in our days has not been less

* Heeren's *Reflections on the Politics and Trade of Ancient Nations*, vol. i. p. 196.

successful in tracing the chain of communication which connected the trade of Arabia, and consequently of India, with the primeval tribes who dwelt above Syené. Ethiopia and Yemen are neighbouring countries, separated only by a narrow strait; and the gold of the one balanced against the spices of the other, naturally give birth to a commerce mutually advantageous. These valuable commodities were well known to the poets and even to the sacred orders of Palestine, who have extolled them in their lofty language as not undeserving the ambition of the greatest sovereigns. When Isaiah, in his prophetic strains, celebrates the victories of Cyrus, he speaks of the submission of the rich merchants on either side of the Red sea as his most magnificent reward. “Thus saith the Lord, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine.” When Jeremiah describes the great victory of Nebuchadnezzar over Pharaoh-Necho, he includes the Ethiopians and the Libyans among the mighty men: and when Ezekiel threatens the downfall of Egypt, he unites with it the still more ancient kingdoms above the cataracts.*

Whence, says the author of the Researches, did Egypt obtain the spices and drugs with which so many thousands of her dead were embalmed? Whence the incense which burned on her altars? Whence that immense quantity of cotton in which her inhabitants were clad, and which her own soil so sparingly produced? Whence proceeded that early rumour of the Ethiopian gold countries which Cambyses set out to discover, and lost half his army in the attempt? Whence that profusion of ivory and ebony which the ancient artists of Greece and Judea used for embellishment? Whence that general and early spread of the name of Ethiopia which glim-

mers in the traditional history of so many nations, and which is celebrated as well by Hebrew prophets as by Grecian bards? Whence all this, while the deserts which surrounded that people seemed to form an eternal barrier between them and the natives of the north? Let the remains of those proud monuments which extend in one unbroken series from Philæ to Merœ give the answer. These immense structures announce in the plainest language that a close connection must have prevailed between the nations which erected them.*

History affords no guide to the path by which commerce found its way from the Arabian gulf to Merœ, the capital of Ethiopia. A line of towns may no doubt be traced, which, in their original form, were probably nothing more than stations for the caravans employed in conveying goods from the sea-shore to the great valley watered by the White and the Blue rivers. Azab, Adule, and Axum, present tokens of ancient magnificence from which inferences have been drawn establishing their importance as seats of trade as well as of religion. Inscriptions have also been discovered proving the antiquity of the buildings to which they were attached; but the ruins are still too little known to justify any comprehensive conclusion, either as to their date or their object.†

No one can be ignorant of the fact, that in the East commerce and religion have always been united together by certain relations. The demands of the priesthood for the uses of their costly worship, their splendid dresses, incense, and precious stones, necessarily attracted the foreign merchant; who, in his turn, found within their sacred courts safety to his person and protection to his stores. In the

* Heeren, vol. i. p. 446.

† The speculations of Bruce relative to the monuments at Axum are familiar to every reader, as are also the remarks of Mr Salt. See also Dr Vincent's "Dissertation on the Adulitick Inscription, collected from Chishull, Montfaucon, Melchisedec Thevenot, and other authors."

limited countries of Europe, inhabited by civilized nations, every town or village supplies a peaceful market. But how different was it in the immeasurable tracts of the Syrian and Arabian deserts ! The rich caravans there had to perform long journeys through lawless tribes, whose profession was robbery, and who relied for their fame as well as their subsistence upon their success in pillaging the trading bands whom necessity compelled to pass their borders. Stations were accordingly selected in several of those green islands which are scattered at various distances over the vast ocean of sand ; where, generally speaking, a temple was erected to the national god, whose power was invoked in behalf of the traveller who came to offer obeisance at his shrine, and of the trader who ministered to the dignity of his establishment. Traffic flourished under the guardianship of the place, and free towns arose in the wilderness around the walls consecrated to the rude piety of the nomade hordes. Mecca, by means of its sanctuary, continues to afford an example of the striking influence of religious feeling over the ferocious habits of a barbarous people ; presenting an asylum for the commerce of Arabia, and attracting at stated periods the principal share of the mercantile property which the improved communication by sea has permitted to remain in the hands of the native Ishmaelite. Even the temple of Jerusalem drew within its courts many who repaired thither to buy and to sell ; and it may be presumed that, at the festival of the Passover, and during the gayer scene which distinguished the Feast of 'Tabernacles, the dealers who frequented the holy city would experience a lively demand for the various commodities which they carried thither.

The annals of the ancient Hebrews do not bestow much attention on the commercial relations of either kingdom after the days of Solomon and Jehoshaphat ; and it is only from the predictions respecting Tyre, found in the books of

Isaiah and Ezekiel, that we learn the extent of the dealings which engaged the ardour and increased the wealth of the merchants on the coast. From the last mentioned of these authorities it may be perceived, that even in those early days an active intercourse was carried on between the Levant and the Euxine. Javan, Tubal, and Meshech were situated on the shores of the latter; and it is added, that they traded in the persons of men and vessels of brass. There can be no doubt that Javan was that part of Greece afterwards known by the name of Ionia. The Armenians, under the appellation of Togarmah, are described as trading in the fairs with horses, horsemen, and mules. The men of Dedan, who journeyed from the Persian gulf, brought horns of ivory and ebony. Judah and the land of Israel traded in the wheat-market of Minnith and Pennag, and in honey, oil, and balm. Iron, cassia, and calamus, seem to have been supplied by the Danites, whose territory extended to the neighbourhood of Damascus. Canna, Aden, Mariaba, Balkh, Samarcand, and Bokhara, with the merchants of Sheba and Raamah, sent to the markets on the borders of Palestine the chief of all spices, jewels, and gold; trading also in blue cloths, brodered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords and made of cedar.*

To the commerce of those times, extending from the Indus to the Mediterranean, and from the shores of Phœnicia to those of the Hellespont, Spain, Britain, and even of Scandinavia, the nations of Europe were indebted for the first seeds of improvement in agriculture, literature, and the fine arts. Tyre, which was herself the daughter of Sidon, had many children spread over the adjacent islands and the neighbouring coasts. Cyprus, supposed to be the Kittim

* Ezekiel xxvii. 12—27. The names in the text are somewhat modernized, and referred to the places to which the geographers of our own days have assigned them.

of the prophets, received part of her population and her riches, and at length rivalled her in luxury and magnificence. It is not only certain that the Tyrians established themselves here, but also that they made it one of their provinces ; for the inhabitants of Cittium rebelled against the parent state when Salmanasser invaded Syria. The connection was however renewed, and subsisted till the time of Alexander the Great, who regarded the subjugation of Cyprus, with its nine cities and chiefs, as a natural consequence of his reduction of Tyre.

Dr Shuckford takes a view somewhat different from that now given, both with respect to Tarshish and Cyprus considered as dependencies of Phenicia. The former he is disposed to identify with Cilicia on the coast of Asia Minor, and the latter, the Kittim of Isaiah, with Macedonia. Bochart, on the other hand, places the isles of Kittim in the Italian seas, and interprets all the expressions used by the prophets with a reference to the rising power of Magna Græcia, which, in subsequent times, carried terror into all the nations of Syria, as well as into those which occupied the borders of the Red sea. In the First Book of the Maccabees, it is true, Alexander, the son of Philip, is described as coming out of the land of Kittim ; and Perseus, the sovereign of Macedon, who was conquered by the Romans, is called the “ King of the Kittims.” Hence, it may be justly inferred that this term, like Ophir and Tarshish, being employed to denote certain characteristic properties in the countries to which it was applied, was in the lapse of ages extended to various islands distinguished by the possession of ships and an active commerce.*

It is admitted that the period at which the several Pheni-

* Connection of Sacred and Profane History, Vol. i. p. 133. Bochart, in Phaleg. lib. iii. c. 9. 1 Maccab. viii. 5.

cian colonies were founded has not been determined with precision. There cannot, however, be any doubt that the establishment of some of their settlements on the Persian gulf and the northern shores of Africa took place in a very remote antiquity. Should even the early foundation of Tartessus and Gades on the Spanish coast be called in question, there is distinct evidence respecting the migration of Cadmus to Bœotia and the building of Thebes ; facts which prove that fifteen hundred years before the Christian era emigrants had crossed the sea from the borders of Tyre and Sidon. The foundation of most of these infant states, it is universally acknowledged, must be fixed in the flourishing ages of Phenicia, when the Tyrian trade made such wonderful advances ; that is, from the reign of King David to the accession of Cyrus as sovereign of Persia ; or, in other words, between 1000 and 550 B. C.*

* Heeren's *Historical Researches into the Politics, Intercourse, and Trade of the Asiatic Nations*, vol. ii. p. 37.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE HISTORY OF EGYPT, ETHIOPIA, AND ARABIA,
AS CONNECTED WITH THAT OF THE HEBREWS
PRIOR TO THE AGE OF SOLOMON.

THERE is no country in the East, if we except the Assyrian empire, with which the Israelites were more intimately connected, whether in suffering or in triumph, than the land of Egypt. Abraham, the father of their nation, went down thither at a very early period, and by the notices, however slight, which are preserved of his visit, gave occasion to the first authentic record relative to that remarkable kingdom. At a later date his descendants, urged by a similar necessity, followed his steps to the fertile regions of the Nile, where the tribulations they endured, and the mighty works which preceded their departure, supplied the most striking proofs of that theocracy or Special Providence which marks the history of the chosen people.

But the annals of Egypt not only connect themselves with the early fortunes of the Jews ; they are also closely associated with the rise of most of those tribes which, at successive eras, founded states westward of the Black sea and

the Syrian desert, and derived from her wise men the rudiments of literature, philosophy, and the arts. Egypt in fact was an old country in the infant days of Greece; and the first writers of Europe describe her grandeur as having long reached its consummation, and even as beginning to pass away. The sages who crossed the Mediterranean in search of knowledge, were astonished at the proofs of an antiquity that surpassed all their notions of recorded time, and at the tokens of a wisdom, genius, and opulence, to the details of which they could hardly hope to gain the belief of their contemporaries. When the nations which at present make the greatest figure in the world, and influence most deeply the condition of the human race, had not yet passed through the first stage of social life, the inhabitants of Thebes and of Memphis had made a vast progress in civilisation, and were even found gratifying a liberal curiosity by inquiries into the constitution of the universe, and into those mysterious laws which regulate the movements of the heavenly bodies.

The Greeks, it has been frequently remarked, were the only European nation who had any pretensions to antiquity; but the wisest even among that ambitious people considered themselves as of yesterday compared to the Egyptians. Plato confessed that his countrymen had no memorial of any event above a thousand or at most two thousand years prior to his own time; whereas, in the days of Moses the wisdom of Egypt had already become proverbial, and that, too, among the Syrian tribes who bordered on the original seats of primeval knowledge. Phœnicia, which, as we have seen, set the first example of commercial intercourse to the rude colonies on the northern side of the great sea, proved the medium through which the laws, the learning, and the religion of the Nile were conveyed to the ancestors of those brave and ingenious races of men who have since associated

an imperishable renown with the memory of Athens and Lacedemon. The names of Cadmus, Cecrops, and Danaus, continue to represent those migrations of Egyptian or Phœnician adventurers who at a remote age transported from the opposite shores the treasures of oriental wisdom.

It has long been an object of inquiry among scholars to discover the channel by means of which civilisation, science, and an acquaintance with the fine arts first reached the magnificent valley watered by the Nile. The result of the investigation has established the probability that the stream of knowledge accompanied the progress of commerce along the banks of those great rivers which fall into the Persian gulf, and thence along the coast of Arabia to the Red sea. There is reason to believe that those passes which still connect the sea just named with the higher portion of the Egyptian river, witnessed the earliest movement of colonists from Asia, who, in search of more fertile lands, or of mountains enriched with gold, found their way into Abyssinia. Nor is it improbable that a similar current in the mean time set eastward across the mouths of the Indus, carrying arts and institutions of a corresponding character into the countries which stretch from that river over the great peninsula of Hindostan.

The most obvious confirmation of the opinion now stated may be drawn from the striking resemblance which is known to subsist between the usages, the superstitions, the arts, and even the mythology of the ancient inhabitants of Western India and those of the first settlers on the Upper Nile. The temples of Nubia, for example, exhibit the same features, both as to the style of architecture and the form of worship which must have been practised in them, with the similar buildings in the neighbourhood of Bombay. In both cases they consist of vast excavations hewn out in the solid body of a hill or mountain, and are decorated with huge figures

which indicate the same powers of nature, or serve as emblems to denote the same qualities in the spirits which rule the universe. There is a likeness, too, in the minor instruments of their superstition, the lotus, the lingam, and the serpent, which can hardly be regarded as accidental; though it is, no doubt, in the immense extent, the gigantic plan, the vast conception that appear in all their sacred buildings, that we most readily discover the influence of the same lofty genius, and the effort to accomplish the same mighty object. The excavated temple of Guerfeh Hassan, for example, reminds every traveller of the cave of Elephanta. The resemblance indeed is singularly striking; as are all the leading principles of Egyptian architecture to that of the Hindoos. They differ only in those details of the decorative parts which trifling points of difference in their religious creeds seem to have suggested to each; but in most respects they are so much alike, that the same workmen might almost be supposed to have superintended the execution of them in both countries. In Egypt and in India large masses of rock have been excavated into hollow chambers, the sides of which are decorated with statues of men and animals carved out of the same stone; and in both are found solid blocks, weighing many hundred tons, separated from the adjoining mountain and lifted up into the air. By whom and by what means these wonderful works have been accomplished is a mystery sunk too deep in the abyss of time ever to be revealed. But it is only necessary to compare the monolithic temples of Nubia with those of Mahabalipoor, and the grottos of Hadjur Silsili with the caverns of Ellora, to be satisfied that these sacred monuments of ancient days derived their origin from the same source.

A resemblance of a corresponding nature has been discovered in the religious usages of the Chinese compared with those of the Egyptians, particularly in what is called the

Feast of Lamps ; a festival observed by the latter people, and described with great accuracy by Herodotus in the second book of his History. This coincidence in a ceremony so little likely to suggest itself to the minds of men who had no intercourse with one another, led M. de Guignes to conclude that the first inhabitants of China must have been a colony from Egypt. But it is easy to account for all such facts upon a much more obvious as well as a more rational hypothesis. No one can have failed to remark, that among the most ancient nations there is a great similarity in point of tradition, habits, opinions, knowledge, and history. The Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Hindoos, and the posterity of Abraham, hold many things in common respecting the creation of the world, the great deluge, the dispersion of the human race, and the first institution of laws and religious worship. It cannot therefore be unreasonable to ascribe this general agreement among the more primitive tribes of mankind to the instruction they had received while as yet they were but one family, or to the traditionary tenets which had spread with the diverging lines of their generations.*

Perhaps there is no stronger proof of an early intercourse between India and Egypt than that which is afforded by the institution of castes—that singular arrangement which places an insuperable barrier between different orders of men in the same country, and renders their respective

* Herodotus Euterpe, c. 62. The opinion of De Guignes is mentioned by Larcher in his notes on the Greek historian. "At the sacrifice solemnized at Sais, the assembly is held by night ; they suspend before their houses in the open air lamps which are filled with oil mixed with salt ; a wick floats at the top, which will burn all night, and the feast itself is called the Feast of Lamps. Such of the Egyptians as do not attend the ceremony think themselves obliged to observe the evening of the festival, and in like manner burn lamps before their houses : thus, on this night not only Sais but all Egypt is illuminated. A religious motive is assigned for the festival itself, and for the illuminations by which it is distinguished."—*Beloe*, vol. i. p. 385.

honours, toils, and even their degradation, strictly hereditary and permanent. *Before the invention of letters, indeed, men may be said to have been in a perpetual infancy; whence arose the expedient, founded in a view of the public good, of compelling sons to cultivate the arts which had originated in their family, and to follow the profession whereby their fathers had acquired distinction.* In allusion to the four classes into which the natives are divided, the Hindoos maintain that of their god Nara-Yana the mouth became a priest, the arm was made a soldier, the thigh was transformed into a husbandman, and from his feet sprang the servile multitude. The narrative of Herodotus bears evidence to the same institution at an early period among the Egyptians. He indeed divides the fourth caste into several subordinate sections, tradesmen, shepherds, interpreters, and pilots; a circumstance which occasions the appearance of a still more minute separation than prevails in India. But his statement, when compared with that of Diodorus Siculus at a later epoch, removes every shadow of doubt in regard to the identity of the principle from which this political device must have originally proceeded.

The Hebrew lawgiver, it is well known, admitted the same ground of distinction to a certain extent; confining the offices of the priesthood and the pursuits of a professional literature to the members of one tribe. So far he might be supposed to have been influenced by the advantages which in Egypt he observed to arise from the preservation of hereditary knowledge in the sacred families; but the Spirit of Wisdom, whose direction he enjoyed, permitted him not to interfere with the occupations of secular life, nor to restrict the instinct of genius, in whatever class of society it might arise, from following its natural impulse towards the improvement of the arts. Bezaleel and Aholiab, the principal artisans whom Moses employed in decorating the tabernacle,

belonged not to the tribe of Levi ; the former being of the house of Judah, and the latter a descendant of Dan. And they worked “ all manner of work of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.”*

It will be found that the more minutely we consider the ancient history of Egypt and of Canaan the more manifest will the traces appear of an early intercourse between the shores of India, the upper regions of the Nile, and the borders of the holy land. Many able writers now concur in the opinion that the arts of sculpture, architecture, and painting, as practised in the Thebaid and even in the neighbourhood of Memphis, descended immediately from Ethiopia, whither they had been conveyed by merchants or colonists instructed in the learning of Hindostan. The style of building above the cataracts appears in the eye of professional judges to have been the model copied by the Egyptians at Luxor and Karnac. The temples more especially bear a closer resemblance to those of India than the corresponding edifices below Syenê, while they exhibit the undoubted marks of a more remote antiquity.†

The hypothesis that the arts of Asia found their way into Egypt by the channel of the Red sea, and the line of the

* Exodus xxxv. 30—35.

† Gau, whose great work on Ethiopian Antiquities bears evidence to his knowledge and perseverance, is of opinion, that the original models of Egyptian architecture may be found in the Nubian monuments, from the rudest rock-excavation to the highest point of perfection ; and that specimens are actually met with in Nubia of the three different epochs of architecture. Of the first attempts, the excavations from the side of rocks, which were not till a later period ornamented with sculpture, the temples of Derar, Ipsambul, and Ghyrshe afford examples. From them Egyptian art proceeded to perfection, as we know from the monuments of Kalabshê, Dekar, &c., and again retrograded, as is shown by the small buildings of Dandour, &c.

mercantile stations of Adule, Axum, and Meröe, seems to derive some confirmation from the great celebrity which the Ethiopians had acquired in the earliest ages that poetry or tradition has revealed. The annals of the Egyptian priests are said to have been full of such reminiscences ; and in return, the nations which dwelt on the Tigris and Euphrates mingled Ethiopian legends with the songs which commemorated the exploits of their own heroes. At a time, too, when the Greeks hardly knew Italy by name, the virtues, the civilisation, and the mythology of the Ethiopians supplied to their great poet a theme of praise. Both in the Iliad and Odyssey, Homer relates that on a certain day in the year the king of gods and men departed from his chosen seat on Olympus, to visit this remote and accomplished people. During twelve days he was absent in their pious and hospitable country ; and it is not unreasonable to conjecture that some annual procession of the priests of Ammon up the Nile, to the primitive scene of their worship, was the occasion of this legend adopted into the popular creed of the Archipelago. Diodorus the historian expresses a similar opinion when he states that the Ethiopians were said to be the inventors of pomps, sacrifices, solemn meetings, and other honours paid to the gods. In other words, they were, in respect to religious ceremonies, the parents of the Egyptians, to whom, in their turn, the countrymen of Homer and Hesiod looked back with veneration as their instructors in sacred things, as well as in the principles of civil polity. It has therefore been deemed probable that ancient Meröe was the original seat of the religion, the arts, and the literature which afterwards shed so bright a lustre on the kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Lucian, too, whose studies sometimes led him to the investigation of antiquities, remarks, that the science of astronomy came originally from Ethiopia, and travelled east-

ward to Babylon. It is doubtful, indeed, whether he ascribed this honour to the Cushites, who occupied the western shores of the Red sea, or to those who flourished on the Arabian side of the gulf; and considering that the two nations drew their origin from the same source, it matters not greatly to which of them he refers. In his story of the Runaway Slave, he introduces Philosophy declaring to Jupiter that from the Brahmins she repaired straight to Ethiopia, from thence to the Egyptians, whose poets and prophets she instructed, and then betook herself to Babylon to give lessons to the Chaldeans.*

As Dr Shuckford has brought the annals of Egypt down to the period of the Hebrew exode, it may seem less necessary on our part to return to the dark ages which preceded that event, or to make any attempt to reach those sources of historical knowledge which lie hid in the distant recesses of time. But during the lapse of a century much research has been employed by the learned on the subject of Egyptian antiquities; and although the results cannot be pronounced altogether satisfactory, a certain approximation to the truth has been attained, which, while it rewards the labour of inquiry, justifies the hope that future investigation will produce discoveries still more valuable and gratifying.

It must be admitted that the narratives supplied by the

* Sabean Researches, p. 89. Mr Tooke, the translator of Lucian, in explaining this passage, makes the following remark. "The route which Lucian causes Philosophy to take, from the Brahmins to the Ethiopians, and from thence for the first time to the Egyptians, agrees perfectly with Herder's very probable hypothesis (which is also corroborated by Diodorus Siculus), that the Egyptians were a people of Southern Asia, who travelled westward over the Red sea, and from Ethiopia by degrees spread themselves over Upper Egypt."—He adds, that his author, "in this speech of Philosophy, presents the reader with a no less elegant than accurately drawn outline of her history; which affords a fresh proof of his not common erudition; and describes the progress of the arts that polish life, and the refinement of the human race from one people to another, with historical accuracy."—*Tooke's Lucian*, vol. i. p. 606, cited by Mr Landseer.

best of the ancient writers are, owing to the want of records, extremely obscure, and at the same time greatly perplexed by groundless conjecture and bold speculation. He who begins his inquiries at the establishment of the monarchy, and proposes to sail down on the stream of events, guided by the old historians, will soon discover a multitude of obstacles to impede his course. The authors from whom he seeks information desire him to carry back his imagination to an era many thousand years prior to the existence of any written deeds; relating the exploits of gods and demigods who had once condescended to dwell on the banks of the Nile, and to govern the favoured inhabitants of that fertile region. Hence, in order to place the history of Egypt on credible grounds, and to render it capable of throwing light on the condition of contemporary kingdoms, we must at once relinquish the regal gods and the thirty-three thousand years of their government, as being only the indication of some physical principle, or perhaps the expression of a vast astronomical cycle. According to the ancient mythology, the sun, moon, and other leaders of the celestial host, may be supposed to have ruled over the Egyptian valley before it became fit for the habitation of mortals; or, as is more probable, the framers of this hypothesis may have had in view nothing more serious than the gratification of their fancy in the airy regions of the unknown past, which in every quarter of the globe stretches far beyond the boundaries of authentic story.

As the reign of Menes defines the limits of rational investigation in the interesting field of Egyptian chronology, and as all correct notions on this subject depend on the determination of the period at which that monarch exercised the supreme power, it may not be deemed unseasonable to give an outline of the facts and reasonings which at present enjoy the approbation of the ablest antiquaries. The following

tabular view will exhibit the date at which he is supposed to have assumed the government :—

| | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|--------|-------------|
| * | According to Dr Hales, | - | 2412 | years B. C. |
| † | —— | Old Chronicle, | 2231 | —— |
| | | Eratosthenes, | 2220 | |
| § | —— | Eusebius, | - 2258 | —— |
| | —— | Julius Africanus, | 2218 | —— |
| ¶ | —— | Dr Prichard, | - 2214 | —— |

As the actions of this monarch were conveyed to posterity through the uncertain channel of tradition, little reliance can be placed on the accuracy of the details. Herodotus relates, that he protected from the inundations of the Nile the ground upon which Memphis was afterwards built. Before his age the river flowed near the ridge of hills which borders the Libyan desert; whence it is more than probable that a large branch of it made its way through the level tract of Fayoum to the Mediterranean, the course being still visible in the dry channel which marks the line of the valley. Menes is moreover said to have been a great general; to have made several warlike expeditions into foreign countries; and at last to have fallen a prey to the voracity of a hippopotamus.

The principal authority on which the reign of this monarch has been determined is Josephus, who had better means of becoming acquainted with the works of Manetho, the Egyptian priest, than were within the reach of Syncellus, Africanus, or Eusebius. He assures us that Menes

* New Analysis of Ancient Chronology, vol. iv. p. 418.

† Ibid. vol. iv. p. 407.

‡ Prichard's Egyptian Antiquities, p. 90.

§ New Analysis, vol. iv. p. 417.

|| Jul. Afric. apud Hales, vol. iv. p. 417.

¶ Egyptian Antiquities, p. 91. Hales and Prichard are among the latest, and are unquestionably the most satisfactory writers on this obscure branch of historical inquiry.

lived many years before Abraham, and that he ruled more than 1300 years prior to the age of Solomon. Now the patriarch, according to the calculation most generally received, was born 2153, and the son of David ascended the throne of Judah 1030 years before the Christian era. These facts, combined with the account given in the Old Chronicle of the dynasty of kings which proceeded from Misraim, seem to justify the conclusions of modern writers.*

Herodotus farther mentions that the priests recited to him from books the names of three hundred and thirty sovereigns, successors of Menes, among whom were eighteen Ethiopian princes, and one queen called Nitocris. But as none of these monarchs had distinguished themselves by any acts of munificence or valour, he abstained from encumbering his pages with the unintelligible catalogue of their appellations and titles. He makes one exception indeed in favour of Mœris, famed for the excavation or embankment of the lake still connected with his memory, and of which the purpose and dimensions are known to most readers. The following list, presented in a very abridged form, fills up the interval between the accession of the first human potentate who swayed the Egyptian sceptre, and the death of the popular king just named.

1st Dynasty—Egyptians, 253 years.

| | Y. | B. C. |
|---|-----|-------|
| Menes and his successors, ending with Timaus, | 253 | 2412 |

2d Dynasty—Shepherd Kings, 260 years.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|----|------|
| 1. Salatis, Silites, or Nirmaryada, | - | 19 | 2159 |
| 2. Baion, Byon, or Babya, | - | 44 | 2140 |
| 3. Apachnes, Pachman, or Ruchma, | - | 37 | 2096 |

* Joseph. Jud. Antiq. lib. viii. c. 3.

| | Y. | B. C. |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 4. Apophes, - - - | 61 | 2059 |
| 5. Janias or Sethos, - - | 50 | 1998 |
| 6. Assis or Aseth, - - | 49 | 1948 |
| <i>Expulsion of Shepherds,</i> - - | 260 | 1899 |

3d Dynasty—Native Kings, 251 years.

| | | |
|---|-----|------|
| Alisphragmuthosis, &c. - - | 27 | 1899 |
| <i>Joseph appointed Regent,</i> - - | 9 | 1872 |
| <i>Jacob's Family settle in Goshen,</i> - | 215 | 1863 |
| <i>Death of Joseph,</i> - - | — | 1792 |
| <i>Exode of Israelites,</i> - - | 251 | 1648 |

4th Dynasty, 340 years.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| 1. Amosis or Tethmosis, - | 25 | 1648 |
| 2. Chebron, - - - | 13 | 1623 |
| 3. Amenophis I. - - - | 20 | 1610 |
| 4. Amesses, - - - | 21 | 1589 |
| 5. Mephris, - - - | 12 | 1567 |
| 6. Mispfragmuthosis, - - | 25 | 1554 |
| 7. Thmosis or Tethmosis, - | 9 | 1528 |
| 8. Amenophis II. - - - | 30 | 1518 |
| 9. Orus or Horus, - - - | 36 | 1488 |
| 10. Acenchris, - - - | 12 | 1452 |
| 11. Rathosis, - - - | 9 | 1440 |
| 12. Acencheres I. - - - | 12 | 1431 |
| 13. Acencheres II. - - - | 20 | 1418 |
| 14. Armais or Harmais, - | 4 | 1398 |
| 15. Ramesses, - - - | 1 | 1394 |
| 16. Harmesses, - - - | 66 | 1393 |
| 17. Amenophis III., or Mæris, - | 19 | 1327 |
| | <u>340</u> | <u>1308*</u> |

The most interesting event that occurred during this long interval was the invasion of Egypt by the Shepherdæ, which, according to the chronology here adopted, took place 2159 years before the birth of Christ. Manetho, the historian already mentioned, inserted in his work a very intelligible notice of the misfortune which befell his country at that early period ; the accuracy of which cannot be called in question except in the point where he is supposed to identify the savage invaders from the East with the peaceful family of Jacob who were invited to settle in the land of Goshen. The fragment has been preserved by Josephus in his tract against Apion, and contains the following statement :—

“ We had formerly a king named Timaus. In his reign, God, upon what account I know not, was offended with us ; and unexpectedly, men from the East, of obscure origin, boldly invaded the kingdom and subdued it without a contest. Having mastered the former rulers, they barbarously burnt the cities, demolished the temples of the gods, and treated all the inhabitants most cruelly ; massacring the men, and reducing the women and children to slavery. They next appointed one of their leaders king, whose name was Salatis. He resided in Memphis, and imposed a tribute on the Upper and Lower Egypt, and put garrisons in the most important places. But chiefly he secured the eastern parts of the country, foreseeing that the Assyrians, who were then most powerful, would be tempted to invade the kingdom likewise. Finding, therefore, in the Saite-nome, a city placed most conveniently on the north side of the Bubastic channel, which in an ancient theological book is called Avaris, he repaired and fortified it very strongly, and garrisoned it with 240,000 soldiers. Hither he used to come in summer to furnish them with corn and pay ; and he care-

fully disciplined them for a terror to foreigners. He died after he had reigned nineteen years.*

“ The next, called Baion, reigned forty-four years ; and after him Apachnes, who ruled thirty-six years and three months ; then Apophes, sixty-one years ; and Janias, fifty years and one month, who was succeeded by Assis, whose government extended to forty-nine years and two months. At length the native princes rebelled against these tyrants, and after a tedious warfare drove them out of the rest of Egypt ; and shut them up in Avaris, where they had collected all their cattle and plunder, and besieged them with an army of 480,000 men. But despairing of success the Egyptians concluded a treaty with them, and they were suffered to depart unmolested from Egypt with all their households, amounting to 240,000 souls, and their cattle. Accordingly they crossed the desert ; but being afraid to return home on account of the Assyrian power, which then held Asia in subjection, they settled in the country of Judea, and there built Jerusalem.”†

Josephus imagined that in this narrative he saw depicted the early fortunes of his own ancestors the children of Israel. But it is much more probable that the people who were thus expelled from Egypt were the fathers of the Philistines, who occupied the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and occasionally extended their power as far as the banks of the Euphrates. Every one knows that in the language of Western Asia, the term *Pali* denotes shepherds, and that *Stan* means land or country ; and accordingly the compound word *Pali-stan* literally signifies shepherd-land. It is there-

* Avaris or Abaris, “ *the Pass*,” was afterwards called Pelusium.

† Joseph. contra Apion, lib. i. c. 14. On this passage Whiston remarks, “ Here we have an account of the first building of the city of Jerusalem, according to Manetho, when the Phenician shepherds were expelled out of Egypt, about thirty-seven years before Abraham came out of Haran.”

fore extremely probable that the warlike nation, who so frequently disputed with the descendants of Abraham the possession of the Syrian border, were the progeny of the royal herdsmen who so long subjected to their thrall the rich territory of Lower and Middle Egypt. Nor is the remembrance of the pastoral expedition yet extinct even among the tribes of Central India. In one of the sacred books of the Hindoos a record is preserved of two remarkable migrations from the East in remote times; first of the Yadavas, or sacred race, and afterwards of the Pali or Shepherds. These last, it is said, were a powerful tribe, who in ancient days governed the whole country from the Indus to the mouth of the Ganges; the same, it is evident, who are called Pali-bothri and Pali-putras in the annals of Hindostan. They were besides an active, enterprising, and roving people, who by conquest and colonization gradually spread themselves over a great part of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Crossing from the shores of the Persian gulf, they took possession of Arabia as well as of the lands on the western shore of the Red sea; in the latter their country was by the Greeks and Romans called Barbaria. This term was derived from *berber*, a shepherd, according to Bruce, who describes them as a race distinct from the natives, with long hair and dark complexions, living in tents, and shifting from place to place for the convenience of pasturage. They seem in fact to be the eastern Ethiopians, as distinguished from the western both by Homer and Herodotus.*

It is well known that the historian just quoted represents the inhabitants of the Syrian Palestine as having, agreeably to their own account, migrated from the shores of the Ery-

* Αἰθιοπας τ' οἱ διχθα δίδαται ἰσχατοι ἀνδρῶν
'Οἱ μιν δυσσομῖνοι ὑπεριονος οἱ δ' ἀνιοντος.

Odyss. lib. i. v. 22.

See also Asiatic Researches, vol. iii. p. 46. Bruce's Travels, vol. ii. p. 21. Iliad, lib. i. v. 423. Herodot. lib. vii.

threan sea to those of the Mediterranean, where they applied themselves to navigation and commerce. How extensively they afterwards spread both in Europe and Asia appears from the cities and places which still retain their name. Thus a Palestine or Palesthan was founded on the banks of the Tigris, most probably their original settlement; the town of Paliputra stood on the Hellespont; the river Strymon in Thrace was denominated *Palestinus*; the *Palestini* and the town *Philistia* were situated on the banks of the Po in Italy; and the god of shepherds among the Latins was denominated *Pales*.*

That the pastors who invaded Egypt had migrated from a distant country in the East is rendered in some measure probable by the following legend still current in India. An ancient king, called *Chatura-Yana*, passed a hundred years in the cavern of *Chrishna-giri*, the black mountain on the banks of the *Cali*, performing the most rigorous acts of devotion. At length *Vishnu* appeared to him, and promised that he should have a son whom he was to name *Tamovasata*. This prince, when he succeeded his father, was warlike and ambitious, but wise and devout. He prayed to *Vishnu* to enlarge his empire, and the god granted his request. Hearing that *Misra-sthan* (the land of Egypt) was governed by a powerful but unjust prince, called *Nirmaryada*, he with a chosen army invaded that country without any declaration of war, and began to administer justice among the people, to give them a specimen of a good king; and when *Nirmaryada* sent to expostulate, he treated the remonstrance with disdain. This brought on a bloody battle, in which the Egyptian king was killed. The conqueror, who fought like another *Parasa Rama*, then took possession of the kingdom of *Misra*, and governed with perfect equity. *Babya Vatsa*, his son, devoted

* Herodot. lib. i. c. v. Hales, vol. iv. p. 427.

himself to religion, and resigned his crown to his son, Rucma Vatsa, who tenderly loved his people, and so highly improved his country, that from his just revenues he amassed an incredible treasure. His wealth was so great that he raised three mountains, Ruem-adri, Rujat-adri, and Retu-adri, or the mountain of gold, of silver, and of gems.*

In this narrative may certainly be traced the distorted features of the Egyptian account. By an interchange of characters, Tamo is the Timaus of Manetho, a quiet and peaceable prince, who was invaded without provocation by this Nirmaryada, of Cushite race, called Salates or Silites. His son Babya is evidently the Baion recorded in the list of Manetho. The third king was surnamed Rucma from his immense wealth, which he collected by oppressing the Egyptians, though he tenderly loved his own people the Shepherds. Wishing either to extirpate the natives, or to break down their spirits by hard and incessant labour, he employed them in constructing those stupendous monuments of ostentation and tyranny. The pyramids, which are obviously the "mountains" indicated in the Hindoo records, were, it may be presumed, originally cased with yellow, white, or spotted marble, brought from the quarries of Arabia.

On the same grounds, it may seem not unreasonable to ascribe the building of the first and largest pyramid to Apachnes, the third of the shepherd-kings, and of the rest to his successors. This conclusion is still farther confirmed by the tradition of the native Egyptians communicated to Herodotus, that "they were built by one Philitis a shepherd, who kept his cattle in those parts, and whose memory was held in such abhorrence that the inhabitants would not even repeat his name nor that of his brother who succeeded him.

It is interesting to notice, that the vindictive feeling of an

oppressed people has preserved the original title of the Shepherds in the foreign term Philitis; the etymology of which, as derived from the Sanscrit word Pali and branching out into all the epithets applied to a celebrated nation in Syria, has already been explained. This hostile spirit entertained by the natives against their barbarian conquerors continued unabated in the age of the patriarch Joseph, when shepherds were still held an "abomination;" a fact which of itself goes far to prove that the celebrated inroad of the pastoral kings must have taken place before this favourite son of Jacob was carried as a slave into the house of Potiphar. Nor is it surprising that the exode of the Israclites should have been confounded by historians with the expulsion of the more ancient invaders. The former were employed in tending cattle as well as the oriental Pali; and in other respects they were not less disliked by the ruling authority to whom their increasing numbers had rendered them formidable. The military array, too, assumed by the followers of Moses, and the pursuit directed by the monarch in person, throw an air of resemblance over the two events. It is manifest, notwithstanding, that the family of Jacob cannot be identified with that warlike host which subdued Lower Egypt, overturned the throne of Memphis, and placed the sceptre in the hands of a powerful dynasty of kings who exercised supreme power during the long period of two hundred and sixty years. The departure of the Hebrews did not take place until the lapse of two centuries and a half had again consolidated the government of the Pharaohs, and improved the resources of the nation. But the true exode of the chosen people, with all the demonstration of miraculous agency by which it was accomplished, requires not to be established by such reasoning; it stands upon a basis much too firm to be shaken by the errors of Manetho or the groundless conjectures of Josephus.

The Jewish historian, as every reader knows, mentions a variety of particulars relative to Moses of which no notice is taken in the Sacred Scriptures. For example, he gives a full account of a war with the Ethiopians in which this son of Amram commanded the Egyptian armies, took Saba, the chief city of the enemy, and married Tharbis, a daughter of the monarch whom he subdued. Eusebius also alludes to the same people, who, he says, attempted a settlement in Egypt about the time that Amenophis was on the throne, and finally planted themselves in the parts adjacent to his territory. They came, he adds, from the river Indus, and in process of time laid the foundations of a kingdom which bore the name of Ethiopia, situated in the regions of the south. Homer, as has been already suggested, speaks of two nations distinguished by the same appellation, the one in the east and the other in the west. Herodotus was of a similar opinion, and places the first among the Indians, and the latter in certain districts not far from Egypt. Apollonius without any hesitation asserts, that the African Ethiopians came from India, and that it was through their forefathers that the ancient learning of the Hindoos was brought to the banks of the Upper Nile. Eustathius also, though somewhat less directly, gives the weight of his judgment to the same conclusion, intimating that the Ethiopian tribes were of Indian extraction. Thus it becomes not improbable that an eastern people, wandering from their ancient habitations, may have approached the borders of Egypt during the reign of Amenophis, and that certain contests may have arisen between them and the natives about the pasture-grounds which extended from the metropolis towards the Red sea. It is manifest, however, that Saba, the city which Josephus supposes to have been the capital of Ethiopia, was one of the principal towns in Arabia Felix; and, moreover, that he was led into this mistake by follow-

ing the version of the Seventy, which every where identifies the land of Cush with the Ethiopian dominions on the western side of the gulf. The English translators have uniformly adopted the same rule ; and more especially with respect to the wife of Moses, who was a daughter of Jethro the Arabian priest, they apply the epithet Ethiopian instead of describing her as a Cushite.*

Referring to the volumes of Dr Shuckford for an account of the connection which subsisted between the Egyptians and Hebrews prior to the exode, as well as for the grounds of his opinion respecting the period when that event took place, I resume the narrative at the death of Menes, who was succeeded on the throne by the celebrated Sesostris. In the history of this victorious hero, Fiction has exhausted all her powers to darken and exaggerate ; and the little light which remains to guide the studious reader to the due appreciation of the statements found in ancient authors, is almost entirely obscured by the clouds of chronological error which from time to time have spread over his reign. His accession at the beginning of the thirteenth century before Christ, though exposed to plausible objections, is nevertheless supported by learned reasonings and profound calculations, an outline of which shall now be presented. Such a step will appear more necessary, when it is considered that Eusebius imagined this conqueror to be the immediate successor of the Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red sea, and that he began his famous expedition while the children of Israel were still wandering in the desert of Arabia. In this opinion the Bishop of Caesarea has been followed by Usher and other modern chronologers. Sir John Marsham, on the other hand, makes him the same with the Shishak of

* Strabo, *Geograph.* lib. i. p. 29 ; lib. ii. p. 103. Herodot. lib. vii. c. 70. Argonaut. lib. vi. c. 1—6.

the Scriptures who invaded Judea in the days of Rehoboam ; a notion which received the concurrence of Sir Isaac Newton, and has been since adopted by many writers of inferior reputation.

That the reign of Sesostris belongs to an intermediate period may, it is thought, be rendered probable from the following considerations :—1. Herodotus relates that he was succeeded by Phoron, and this last by Proteus, in whose time Troy was taken ; and according to Manetho, Sesothis was succeeded by Rampses, and this last by Ramesses, in whose reign in like manner Troy was reduced. Therefore, it is presumed, Sesothis and Sesostris were the same person ; and if so it is perfectly clear that, reckoning three reigns equivalent to three mean generations, he could not have entered upon his government much earlier than 1283, or a century before the destruction of 'Troy. 2. In his fourth book, Herodotus states that Targitaus founded the Scythian kingdom about a thousand years at most before the invasion of Darius Hystaspes, or, in other words, about 1508 before the Christian era. But we learn from the historian Justin, that Timaus, the sixth king in succession from Targitaus, encountered Sesostris, and checked or defeated him at the river Phasis. Reckoning these six reigns equivalent to as many generations, or two hundred years, the accession of Sesostris could not be earlier than 1308 before Christ. 3. Herodotus again mentions that Sesostris founded the kingdom of Colchis near Pontus, and left a colony there, consisting of such of his soldiers as were weary of service ; and we are informed by Apollonius Rhodius that the posterity of the Egyptian governor existed at *Æa*, the capital of Colchis, for many generations. This governor was the father of *Æetes*, who was the father of *Medea*, the mistress of *Jason* in the Argonautic expedition, which, it is generally admitted, took place

about 1225 B. C.—that is, seventy-four years after Sesostris returned from his Asiatic campaigns.*

The confirmation thus afforded to the Egyptian chronology by historical facts incidentally mentioned by Grecian writers is extremely satisfactory, and illustrates the soundness of the principle on which this system of dates is founded. It is deserving of notice, at the same time, that the hero whose exploits fill so large a space in the traditional story of ancient Egypt has been placed, on the authority of certain hieroglyphical researches, at the beginning of the thirteenth century before the reign of Augustus Cæsar, and thereby distinctly identified with the great Sesostris, the conqueror of the eastern world.

Our principal guide in tracing the path of this celebrated monarch in his warlike achievements is Diodorus Siculus. In his first expedition after he came to the throne he attacked the Abyssinians, whom he is said to have reduced to the condition of tributaries. He then turned his arms against the nations who dwelt on either shore of the Red sea; advanced along the Persian gulf; and, finally, if we may trust to the accuracy of the Sicilian narrator, marched at the head of his troops into India, and even crossed the Ganges. Directing his face towards Upper Asia, he next subdued the Assyrians and Medes; whence, passing to the confines of Europe, he ravaged the land of the Scythians, until he sustained the reverse already mentioned at the hands of Timaus their valiant prince on the banks of the Phasis. Want of provisions, and the impenetrable nature of the country which defended the approaches to ancient Thrace, compelled him to relinquish his European campaign. He accordingly returned to Egypt in 1209 B. C.—being the ninth year of his military enterprise.

* Herodotus lib. iv. c. 5—7; lib. ii. c. 103. Justin. lib. i. c. 1. Apoll. Rhod. lib. iv. p. 272. Hales, vol. iv. p. 133.

Making due allowance for the exaggeration which always takes the place of authentic records, most readers will nevertheless be disposed to admit that the history of Sesostris cannot be wholly reduced to fiction, nor entirely ascribed to the mythological wanderings of Bacchus or Osiris. We are assured on the personal evidence of Herodotus and Strabo that the pillars erected by the Egyptian commander were still remaining in their days, and that they themselves actually inspected them in Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Ethiopia. Another circumstance corroborative of the general accuracy of the old annalists has been already noticed; the establishment of an Egyptian colony in the province of Colchis. The descendants of this military association, presenting the dark complexion and woolly hair of Africa, were long distinguishable from the natives of the district among whom they dwelt. Nay, at the present moment it is possible to find among the Circassians certain families whose blood might be traced to the soldiers of Sesostris, and whose features still verify the traditional relationship which connects them with the ancient inhabitants of the Nile.

In all countries it is usual to hear the fame of a popular monarch increased by having ascribed to him not only all the heroic deeds transmitted by the chroniclers of the olden time, but also all the magnificent palaces and gorgeous temples of which the remains afford to the multitude a gratifying proof that their nation was once not less wealthy than powerful. On this account it may be held as a probable conclusion that Sesostris, under the several names or titles of Osymandias, Ramesses, Sethosis, and Sethon, has had attributed to him the merit of erecting several splendid edifices, which is really due to sovereigns of a less imposing celebrity. At all events, it is not doubted by any one that both Memphis and Thebes owed some of their finest structures to the conqueror of Asia; and it is even recorded by

his panegyrists that the riches, together with the immense number of prisoners which crowned his successes in the East, enabled him to decorate all the towns of Egypt without exacting from his native subjects any portion of their labour or revenue. The newer capital, especially, was enlarged and ornamented with the most profuse expenditure. The statues, the temples, and the obelisks which adorned it, are described by historians in the highest language of encomium, and were probably equal to all the praise bestowed upon them ; but the infelicity of its situation, exposed to the periodical inundations of the Nile, has so completely obliterated all traces of its existence that antiquaries cannot now determine the precise spot on which it stood. Thebes, on the contrary, which enjoyed a more secure position, and was perhaps built of more durable materials, displays at the present day the magnificence of her princes, combined with the improved taste which distinguished her inhabitants.

The successors of Sesostris did not, for several generations, perform any remarkable action, nor allow their ambitious views to extend beyond the limits of their native kingdom. It might be asserted perhaps on good grounds that the power of Egypt was then not more than sufficient to defend her own borders against the erratic hordes who constantly threatened her in the east, and the more regular armaments of Abyssinia which occasionally made an inroad from the south. About the year 770 B. C. Sabaco the Ethiopian descended the Nile and drove Anysis from the throne. Sixty years later, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, meditated the conquest of the same country, and had actually entered its territories when his immense host was destroyed by a divine visitation. The following table exhibits the names of the several sovereigns who exercised dominion over Egypt, from the death of Mœris down to the beginning of the seventh century before the Christian era :—

5th Dynasty, 342 years.

| | Y. | B. C. |
|--|-----|-------|
| 1. Sethos, Sesostris, or Osymandias, - | 33 | 1308 |
| 2. Rampses or Pheron, - - | 61 | 1275 |
| 3. Cetes, Proteus, or Ramesses, - | 50 | 1214 |
| 4. Amenophis IV. - - | 40 | 1164 |
| 5. Rampsinites, - - | 42 | 1124 |
| 6. Cheops or Chemnes, - - | 50 | 1082 |
| 7. Cephrenes, Cephres, or Sesah, - | 56 | 1032 |
| 8. Mycerinus or Cherinus, - | 10 | 976 |
| His death, - - | 342 | 966 |

6th Dynasty, 293 years.

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|
| A chasm, - - | 151 | 966 |
| 1. Bochoris or Asychis, - - | 44 | 815 |
| 2. Anysis, - - | 2 | 771 |
| 3. Sabacon or So, - - | 50 | 769 |
| Anysis again, - - | 6 | 719 |
| Sebecon or Sethos, - | 40 | 713 |
| Sennacherib invades Egypt, - - | | 711 |
| End of the period, - | 293 | 673 |

It will be understood by every one who is acquainted even with the elements of chronology, that the Egyptian dynasties are here arranged without any regard to the succession of gods and demigods who are imagined to have reigned more than thirty thousand years before the accession of Menes. The first dynasty noted above coincides with the sixteenth of the Old Chronicle, as transcribed by Manetho,

* View of Ancient and Modern Egypt, p. 85. New Analysis of Chronology, vol. iv. p. 419.

and which, according to Dr Hales, began to rule in the year before Christ 2412. The work of this ancient priest, whom Philadelphus employed to write the antiquities of his country, is unfortunately lost ; a casualty the more to be regretted, not only because the extract from it made by Josephus relative to the shepherd-dynasty shows its great value, but also on account of the unwarrantable corruptions introduced into it by Africanus and Eusebius. These authors, not perceiving that his sole object was to furnish a commentary on the third part of the Old Chronicle, where the human reigns, properly so called, are observed to commence, thought it necessary, in order to complete the full number of thirty dynasties, to interpolate fifteen supposititious ones between the genuine XVIth and XVIIth. This undue freedom has occasioned great confusion and embarrassment in the Egyptian chronology. Marsham, Jackson, and others, have attempted to remove the discrepancy by representing those surreptitious dynasties as collateral or synchronizing with the true ones ; proceeding on the hypothesis that there was a distinction between the kings of the Thebaid, and those of Sais and Tanis in Lower Egypt.

The amended chronology of Syncellus, founded on a careful comparison of all the tables supplied by his predecessors, establishes in some places a remarkable agreement between the Egyptian dates and those of the Sacred Writings. It gives the corrected accession of Mestram, or at least the settlement of his family in Egypt 2613 B. C., which only differs a single year from the true epoch. By the Old Chronicle this event is made to take place sixty years earlier. Again, it fixed the accession of the thirty-third king, Amosis or Tethmosis, 1649 B. C., differing only a year from the date at which the Hebrews left the dominions of Pharaoh. Such coincidences of Sacred and Profane History, derived as they are from totally different and independent sources, fur-

nish the strongest presumption in favour of the chronological system which thus illustrates their harmony.*

On this subject candour requires that the difference of opinion which prevails respecting the renowned son of Mœris should not be passed without notice. It has just been stated that Marsham and Newton laboured to identify Sesostris with the Shishak of the Bible ; and it cannot be surprising that such writers should have secured for their hypothesis the commendation of a large class of readers. Sir Isaac maintained that his opinion was not new, but that “ Josephus discovered it when he affirmed that Herodotus erred in ascribing the actions of Sesac to Sesostris, and that the error was only in the name of the king : for this is as much as to say that the true name of him who did those things described by Herodotus was Sesac, and that Herodotus erred only in calling him Sesostris, or that he was called Sesostris by a corruption of his name.” He then refers to Sir John Marsham, “ our great chronologer,” who had previously arrived at the same conclusion. “ And,” he adds, “ if this be granted, then it is most certain that Sesostris came out of Egypt in the fifth year of Rehoboam to invade the nations, and returned back into Egypt in the fourteenth year of that king ; and that Danaus, then flying from his brother, came into Greece a year or two after.”†

Reasons have been already given, on the authority of Herodotus, sufficient to prove that Sesostris flourished three hundred and thirty years before the reign of Rehoboam. But, as the opinion of Newton has been received with favour

* Dr Hales follows out this view at some length in his fourth volume, p. 410, where he observes, “ that from the comparison of parallel chronicles it appears, that whatever variations may exist among the chronographers respecting the number and length of reigns in the *detail*, yet they remarkably agree in entire *periods* handed down from their predecessors, which approach very near each other in their beginnings and lengths.”

† Newton's *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, p. 70. Hales, vol. i. p. 232.

by some modern chronographers, it may not be unseasonable to fortify at greater length the ground which we have occupied in opposition to his hypothetical views.*

The first difficulty that occurs in our inquiries arises from the different names by which he is designed in the works of ancient authors. Thus he has been variously called Sesostris, Sesosis, Sesochis, Sesonchosis, Sethos, Sethosis, Ramesses, Ramestes, Vexores, Ægyptus, and Osymandias. It is admitted however that most of these appellations are merely titular ; while it is acknowledged to be no longer possible to render Egyptian names according to the grammatical rules established in the Coptic language. Still it cannot be denied that there is no chronological question upon which the testimonies of Greek and Roman historians are more discordant. If we follow Justin we shall learn that Vexores made war against the Scythians 1500 years before the reign of Ninus. Agathias, on the other hand, satisfies himself with the assurance that, before Ninus reigned, Sesostris established a colony in Colchis. Apollonius Rhodius and Valerius Flaccus, the poets who have sung the expedition of the Argonauts, represent the wars which the Egyptian monarch carried on with the Asiatic nations as having taken place long before the arrival of Jason in Colchis. Dicæarchus asserts that Sesonchosis reigned immediately after Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris. It is mentioned by Ælian that Sesostris was instructed by Hermes ; and the same prince is said in the Paschal Chronicle to have been contemporary with Hermes Trismegistus, who, according to the Old Chronicle, flourished not less than 1500 years before Christ. If, again, we confide in Aristotle, we must believe that the

* Newton wrote his chronology in the decline of life, and left it in some degree imperfect. It bears not the marks of his usual depth of thought, and is chargeable with several inconsistencies ; but many allowances ought to be made, for, as Larcher observes, “ *La chronologie des Egyptiens est ce qu’il y a de plus difficile et de plus epineux dans l’histoire ancienne.* ”

reign of Sesostris in Egypt was long prior to that of Minos in Crete; and Minos, it need not be added, lived more than fourteen centuries before the Christian era. By Manetho the great conqueror is placed as the third king of the twelfth dynasty; a succession of rulers, of whom we can know nothing certain except that they must have preceded by some centuries the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt. But the same author, as interpreted by Josephus, describes Sesostris under the names of Ramesses and *Ægyptus*, and consequently as reigning at no distant period from the exode. According to Herodotus, as we have already mentioned, Sesostris mounted the throne immediately after the death of Mœris, which, agreeably to the calculations of Dr Hales, took place 1308 years before the era of Redemption. But Diodorus Siculus maintains that six generations passed between Mœris and the celebrated ruler usually esteemed his son; a statement which would bring down the accession of the latter to the year 1119 B. C. Finally, if we credit Josephus, Sesostris was Shishak who sacked Jerusalem in the time of Rehoboam, nearly a hundred and fifty years later.*

Amidst these conflicting testimonies modern chronologers have generally followed either Herodotus or Josephus; making Sesostris either the son of Mœris, who died more than thirteen hundred years before the reign of Augustus Cæsar, or Shishak, who made war upon the immediate successor of Solomon. In favour of the opinion held by the Jewish antiquary several writers both in France and England have contended with more zeal than success. No Greek

* Juniani Justini Hist. lib. ii. c. 3. Agath. lib. ii. Apoll. Rhod. lib. iv. v. 272. Val. Flac. lib. v. v. 420. Ælian. lib. xii. Arist. Politic. lib. vii. c. 10. Syncel. Chron. p. 60. Herodot. lib. ii. c. 101. Diod. Sicul. lib. i. c. 53. Joseph. Jud. Antiq. lib. viii. c. 10. The remark of Howard will here naturally suggest itself: "The ancient chronology of Egypt is a labyrinth, from which it is impossible for us, at this day, to extricate ourselves."

author has brought down the reign of Sesostris to so late a period as that mentioned by Josephus. Herodotus, no doubt, has said that he saw in Palestine of Syria certain columns which were understood to be monuments of his triumph erected by Sesostris: but it is very unlikely that if this victorious leader had enriched himself with the treasures collected in Jerusalem, and more especially if he had plundered the temple, such facts would have been omitted by the Grecian historians, who seem to have been particularly anxious to obtain information concerning the exploits of the Egyptian hero.

It may be admitted that some of the Greeks confounded the name of Sesostris with Shishak, or Soussakeim, and called the great conqueror Sesochis. But it is nevertheless perfectly manifest that the accounts contained in the Sacred Writings do not authorize us to suppose, that Shishak was the same prince who gave to himself the appellation of Ramesses on that celebrated obelisk of which the inscription in hieroglyphics has been interpreted by Hermapion. The expedition against Judea appears to have been nothing more than a predatory inroad; and Josephus himself admits that, when the Egyptian king had spoiled the sacred metropolis, he returned home and left the Hebrew sovereign in quiet possession of his kingdom.*

It is farther to be observed, as Sir W. Drummond remarks, that Jeroboam the rival king of Israel had fled to Shishak in the reign of Solomon; and it appears that the

* 2 Chronicles xii. 2—9. “So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king’s house; he took all; he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made.”

But as the people humbled themselves before Jehovah, the prophet Shemaiah was commissioned to say, “They have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak.”—Verse 7.

Egyptian remained in his own country until nine years afterwards, when he took advantage of the dissensions then prevailing among the Hebrews to invade their land. In these accounts we find not any resemblance to the narrative which describes the victories of Sesostris, who made no permanent residence in his native dominions until he had returned triumphant from Asia. In a word, if Shishak and Sesostris were the same individual it would be vain to speak of his conquests as having extended beyond the Jewish territories to the banks of the Indus, and even to those of the Ganges. The historians of Palestine would not have omitted to mention a fact so interesting, had the plunderer of Jerusalem been the conqueror of the Asiatic nations.*

Upon the whole, then, it is concluded that the opinion of Josephus with regard to the identity of the two Egyptian princes is untenable. It is not in any degree supported by the authority of Scripture, while it is clearly contradicted by the testimony of every ancient author who has recorded the history or who has even mentioned the name of Sesostris. Diodorus brings down the reign of this monarch to a much later period than any other Grecian writer; and yet, according to his account, he must have flourished nearly a century and a half before Shishak. Those persons therefore who would oppose the scheme of Josephus to the records of all the Greek historians and chronographers, ought to be able to advance some better reasons than have yet been adduced for the preference they give to the Hebrew annalist.†

But it is alleged, though the author of the Jewish Antiquities was wrong in attempting to identify the hero celebrated by Herodotus with the enemy of Rehoboam, he might yet have truly urged that the conquest of the Syrian Palestine could not have taken place at the time assigned

* Origines, vol. ii. p. 504.

† Ibid. p. 510.

by the historian of Halicarnassus. It is said that we read nothing about Egypt in the pages of the sacred writers from the time of the exode until the period when Solomon married a daughter of Pharaoh ; and it is asked, how then is it possible to believe that Asia could have been conquered during any part of this interval, unless we suppose, what is incredible, that so important an event had come to pass without the knowledge or the notice of the inspired chroniclers ?*

In reply it seems not unreasonable to state, that the expedition of Sesostris, assuming that his accession took place 1308 B. C., must have crossed the Syrian border at the time when the Hebrews were governed by their Judges ; a period on which their brief annals throw very little light, and during which their commonwealth was connected by no permanent bonds. Besides, as the Israelites in those days were frequently in a state of thralldom, bearing successively the yoke of the Canaanites, the Mesopotamians, the Midianites, the Amalekites, the Ammonites, and the Philistines, a victorious foreigner might subdue or lay waste the country without encountering the Twelve Tribes as a distinct, a sovereign, and an independent people. Nor ought it to escape attention that the Egyptian prince, according to Diodorus, turned his arms first against the nations who dwelt on either shore of the Red sea ; after which he advanced along the Persian gulf, entered India, and pursued his course beyond the Ganges ; nor was it until he had overrun the more southern provinces that he directed his march towards Upper Asia, where he vanquished the Assyrians and Medes. Proceeding westward he came in contact with the Scythians, whose irregular forces he dissipated or defeated ; whereupon he crossed into Europe, with the inten-

* Origines, vol. ii. p. 517.

tion of subjecting to his authority all the kingdoms which stretched between the Bosphorus and the Ionian sea. The reverse which he sustained in battle with the valiant chief of the Thracians impressed upon him the necessity of turning his face homewards; and hence we may conclude it was only while accomplishing this retrograde movement that he visited the shores of Asia Minor and the fields of Palestine. Syria, therefore, witnessed his retreat only, instead of becoming the scene of his wars and the theatre of his triumphs. Meeting with no resistance, his progress at this stage of his enterprise was not marked with blood; and viewing himself as the master of all the territory through which he made his way, he might yield to the flattery of his followers, and permit the inscription,—

“SESOSTRIS, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS,

Considering the circumstances under which the invasion is supposed to have been effected, the silence of the Hebrew historians cannot appear surprising. The period which elapsed between Joshua and Samuel presents very few records to illustrate political events or warlike exploits. The Book of Judges does not profess to comprehend more than a biographical sketch of the chief persons who exercised the local government, and a summary detail of the various servitudes which they were respectively employed by Divine Providence to bring to an end. In truth, the silence of the inspired pages at this particular period is no proof that the army of Sesostris did not pass from the Black sea to the sands of Egypt, through the borders of Tyre and Sidon and the lordships of the Philistines; on the contrary, it supplies a presumption that, if such an expedition did take place after the exode, it must have occupied some portion of the period which elapsed between the settlement of the Hebrews

in Canaan and the commencement of the regal power in the person of Saul.

There is to be found in the sixth book of Tacitus's *Annals* a strong though a somewhat indirect proof that Shishak was not Sesostris. Speaking of the phoenix, and of the various opinions entertained as to its return at the interval of 500 years, he remarks, "the report is, that the bird first appeared in the time of Sesostris, then in the reign of Amasis; next in that of the third of the Ptolemies, and now in the reign of Tiberius. But," he adds, "the interval from Ptolemy to Tiberius is less than 250 years, and therefore many suppose this not to have been the Arabian phoenix."

In this passage Tacitus evidently supposes that the two former periods were each 500 years, making an interval of 1000 between Sesostris and Ptolemy Euergetes. From the accession of the latter prince to the twentieth year of Tiberius was, according to him, less than 250 years. It was in fact 281 years; while the distance between Sesostris and Ptolemy was about 1061. These sums together make 1342, from which if we subtract 34—the year of Christ in which the historian wrote—there will remain precisely 1308, the very date assumed as the basis of our calculations on Egyptian chronology after the death of Mœris.

It ought to be remarked that the accession of Amasis divides the period of 1000 years (from Sesostris to Ptolemy) unequally, allotting 700 before him and only 300 after him. To remedy this incongruity the learned Perozonius substituted Anysis, whose reign began 771 B. C., in place of Amasis which it nearly resembles. This adjustment gives 537 before Anysis, and 524 after him, or 500 in round numbers, and reconciles the observation of the historian with chronological facts. It has been noticed that the space between the accession of Ptolemy and the twentieth of Tiberius was 281 years, whereas the Roman author states it as

being under 250 ; but, if we count from the death of Euergetes, 223 B. C., the interval will be reduced to 256 years, confining the apparent discrepancy within such limits as not to affect the general result. Tacitus, it is manifest, does not profess to write with minute precision when alluding to an incident connected with a vulgar superstition.*

Amidst all the doubts which darken his career, it would be in vain to deny to the traditions of ages, to the records of history, and to the authority of monuments, that Sesostris must have been one of the greatest princes that ever lived ; while we openly confess our scepticism as to the extent of his conquests, and acknowledge that we cannot confidently ascertain the period at which he flourished. The existence of the monarch we may consider as unquestionable, and some of the achievements of the conqueror we may admit to be probable ; though we cannot shut our eyes to the just suspicion that the number of his triumphs has been exaggerated, and that all the legends connected with his reign are interspersed with fiction. It is known that the great Ramesses or Ramestes erected at least one obelisk, on which he announced himself to be loved and endowed by all the gods of Egypt ; but it may be questioned at the same time whether he had the right to assume the title of master of the whole habitable world. We may believe that Sesostris gained many victories and subdued many regions, though we be compelled to avow that we are unable to tell when this mighty potentate reigned ; where were the limits of his

* This remark, extracted from the sixth book of the Annals, was communicated to Dr Hales by the Right Honourable W. C. Plunket.

The early Christians adopting the fable of the phoenix, elegantly viewed it as an emblem of Christ's resurrection. This will satisfactorily account for the prevailing report of the last appearance of the bird in the 20th year of Tiberius, A. D. 34, when, according to the opinion of some chronologers, Jesus of Nazareth was crucified and rose again from the dead.—Spanheim's *Chronologia Sacra*, cited by Dr Hales.

empire ; what humbled nations bowed before his throne ; or what captive kings were yoked to his triumphal car.*

Nor has any assistance been hitherto derived either from the interpretation of the numerous hieroglyphs which decorate the ancient buildings of Egypt, or from the inspection of those more formal records brought to light during the present century. Many learned men in France, England, Italy, and Germany, have devoted their attention to the study of sacred sculptures, but without conferring upon history and antiquities any material benefit. The immediate cause of this failure will be hereafter pointed out ; meantime it may be sufficient to state, that neither the Rosetta stone nor the tablet of Abydos affords any means for determining the age of Sesostris. Hopes were indeed at one time fondly entertained that a careful examination of the slabs now mentioned would supply a standard for fixing the principal epochs of Egyptian chronology, and in particular for coming to a clear decision relative to the dynasties in Manetho's canon. The result, however, has not in any degree fulfilled the expectations that were formed, nor justified the confident assertions with which in some remarkable cases they are known to have been accompanied. M. Champollion, for example, had no doubt that his labours were crowned with success when he undertook to illustrate the perfect concordance between part of the table of Abydos and the eighteenth dynasty, as exhibited by the Egyptian priest. The following lists present the conclusions to which he arrived at two different periods ; the names in both columns applying to the same individuals.

Amosis.

Chebron.

Amenophis I.

Misphra—Thoutmosis.

Amenoftef.

Thôoutmosis I.

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Amenses. | Ammon-Mai. |
| Mephrès or Mesphres. | Thoutmosis (Mœris.) |
| Misphra-Touthmosis. | Amenophis I. |
| Touthmosis. | Thoutmosis III. |
| Amenophis II. | Amenophis II. (Memnon.) |
| Horus. | Horus. |
| Chencheres. | Ramses I. |
| Rathosis. | Ousirei. |
| Ramses I. | Ramses II. |
| Ramses Meiamoun. | Ramses IV. (Meiamoun.)* |

It has been remarked, that M. Champollion by adopting the second of these lists abandoned the first; and by omitting to insert either of them in his most finished work on Hieroglyphics (the second edition of the *Precis*), he virtually abandoned both; though he still adhered to the conclusion at which he pretended to have arrived through their aid, namely, the perfect truth and accuracy of Manetho's record. In his letters indeed, written from Egypt and Nubia, he inserted a third list; a copy of which is here given, together with two other catalogues more recently published, and which appear to be constructed on his plan.

| M. CHAMPOLLION. | SIGNOR ROSELLINI. | MR WILKINSON. |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Amenôf, Amenoftep, or Amenophis. | |
| | Thutmes I. (<i>his son.</i>) | Ames. |
| | Thutmes II. (<i>his son.</i>) | Amunoph I. |
| | Amense (<i>his sister,</i> | (<i>Amense included in the</i> |
| | <i>Thutmes III. her</i> | <i>reign of Thotmes I.)</i> |
| | <i>first husband, Ame-</i> | |
| | <i>nophis her second.</i>) | |
| | Thutmes IV. (<i>son of</i> | |
| | <i>Amense and Thut-</i> | |
| | <i>mes III.</i>) | |

* See first edition of Champollion's *Precis*, and his first letter to M. De Blacas, with Dr Wall's Examination of the Ancient Orthography of the Jews, and of the original State of the Text of the Hebrew Bible. Part i. p. 241.

| M. CHAMPOLLION. | SIGNOR ROSELLINI. | MR WILKINSON. |
|---|---|---|
| | Amenof II. | Thothmes II. |
| | Thutmes V. | Thothmes III. |
| | Amenóf III. (<i>his son.</i>) | Amunoph II. (<i>his son.</i>) |
| | Hôr. | Thothmes IV. (<i>his son.</i>) |
| | Tmauhmot. | Maut-ni-shoi (<i>regency.</i>) |
| | Ramses I. (<i>her brother.</i>) | Amunoph III. (<i>son of Thothmes IV., the supposed Memnon.</i>) |
| Meneptha I. (<i>Ousirei.</i>) | Menepthah I. (<i>his son.</i>) | Amun-men (<i>his son.</i>) |
| | Ramses II. (<i>his son.</i>) | Rameses or Ramesso I. |
| Rhamscs the Great (<i>Sesostris.</i>) | Ramses III. (<i>his brother Sesostris.</i>) | Osirei (<i>his son.</i>) |
| Menepthah II. | Menepthah II. (<i>his son.</i>) | Ramscs II. or Rameses the Great (<i>his son Sesoosis or Sesostris.</i>) |
| Menepthah III. | Menepthah III. (<i>Taosra and Siphah.</i>) | |
| Rhamerrè. | Verri. | Pthahmen Thmeioftep, or Thmeio-ftep-ho.* |

It is perhaps more easy to detect in ancient records a resemblance in the names assigned to the monarchs of the several dynasties, than to ascertain the date at which they reigned. Pliny, who endeavoured to penetrate the maze of Egyptian antiquities, recites the titles or appellations of nine sovereigns who distinguished themselves by the erection of obelisks, which he imagined were dedicated to the god of the

* "Certainly," says Dr Wall, "the five lists present a very strange appearance, considering that they are all primarily derived from one and the same record—the Table of Abydos. Our astonishment, however, is somewhat lessened when it is recollected that there is but a single name phonetically written in that Table, and of course but one single word immediately thence derivable; for it is evident that upon such slight foundations a thousand different lists might be as easily and securely grounded as any one of these five. From the appearance of the last list, particularly of its names *Maut-ni-shoi*, and *Thmeio-ftep-ho*, I should not be at all surprised if the next reading of the Table of Abydos with which we may be favoured (*à nubibus*) from Nubia should prove to be the catalogue of a race of Chinese Emperors."—Page 242.

sun, as being a representation of the solar rays. Mestres, in his opinion, was the first who formed such a pillar ; being ordered in a dream to prepare this memorial for the resplendent deity in whose city he kept his royal residence, and to record in suitable figures the object for which it was elevated. Other kings subsequently followed this example. Sothis made four, each forty-eight cubits in length ; and Ramises, who reigned at the time when Troy was taken, completed one of forty cubits. There are two more, one by Smarres, the other by Erapheis, forty-eight cubits long, but without any inscriptions. Ptolemy Philadelphus set up one at Alexandria, hewn under the direction of King Nectebis : it is likewise destitute of sculptures.

The same author farther relates, that the obelisk which Augustus erected in the great circus at Rome was cut by Semneserteus, who was on the throne when Pythagoras was in Egypt. Its length is a hundred and twenty-five feet, exclusive of the pedestal ; but he adds, that the one in the Campus Martius, which is nine feet shorter, was executed by Sesostris. They are both carved, says he, and contain the interpretation of the nature of things according to the philosophy of the Egyptians. There is also mention made of one, formed after the model of that which Nuncoreus the son of Sesostris had offered ; and of another, a hundred cubits long, which the same ruler dedicated on his recovery from blindness.—Could Nuncoreus be identified with any of the monarchs in Manetho's canon, an occasion would be thereby afforded of determining the place assigned by Pliny to the great conqueror ; but as such an attempt would prove altogether fruitless, we shall merely transcribe the names he has specified, and arrange them opposite to the corresponding princes in the Egyptian catalogue.

| PLINY. | MANETHO. |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Mestres. | Misaphris Thothmosis I. |
| Amasis. | Thothmosis IV. |
| Sothis. | Sethos, Ramesses II. |
| Ramises. | Ramesses V. |
| Amasis. | Amosis of Sais. |
| Psammetichus. | Psammetichus of Sais. |
| Semneserteus. | Psammetichus I. |
| Nectebis. | Nectanebo. |
| Graphius. | Vaphris or Hophra.* |

Before adverting more particularly to the origin and purpose of hieroglyphics, and to that intermediate state between pictorial and alphabetical language which is denoted by the use of phonetic emblems, it will be proper to introduce a few observations on the history of the Ethiopians and Arabians, so far as these nations were connected with the Hebrews in early times.

In attempting to acquire information respecting the countries known to the ancients under the name of Ethiopia, the antiquary has to encounter the numerous obstacles which arise from the absence of a national literature, as well as from a succession of conquests made by various tribes more barbarous than the people they subdued. Here indeed, as in Egypt, may be studied the record of monuments which indicate the genius and religion of the inhabitants by whom the land was occupied at a very distant period; but it is manifest that, in reading the language supplied by the arts, it must

* Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. xxxvi. c. 13, 14, 15.—Mr Sharpe, from whose "Early History of Egypt" I have copied the table given above, remarks, that "the hieroglyphics on the obelisks at Rome do not altogether confirm this account of Pliny: that in the Piazza del Popolo, from the Circus Maximus, bears the name of Thothmosis IV.; it has on it smaller names, evidently a later addition, which the engravings do not give accurately enough to depend upon, but they appear to be of Rameses; if this be the fact, it will apologize for Ammianus Marcellinus, who pretends to give a translation of the inscription, and says that it was in honour of Rameses. That in the Campus Martius (on Monte Citorio), has the name of Psammetichus."

be extremely difficult to avoid the ambiguity inseparable from their expression with respect to the precise date at which they flourished. The ruins of cities, of temples, and of obelisks, may no doubt bear evidence to the wisdom of former ages, to the power of conquerors, and to the magnificence which throws a transient splendour even over the memory of the most selfish tyrants ; still it is impossible, as we have just found, to discover in them the genealogy of the nations to whom they were indebted for their origin, or the earliest rudiments of that mechanical skill of which they illustrate so strikingly the progress and the perfection. A cloud hangs over the horizon of the remote antiquity with which we are desirous to become acquainted ; and as the current of time incessantly carries us farther from the point whither our researches are directed, we can hardly be said to enjoy the encouragement which arises from the persuasion that human industry, judiciously applied, will ever enable us to accomplish the object of our labours.

From its vicinity to the Mediterranean, and to the great thoroughfare which connected the Asiatic with the European nations, Egypt was comparatively well known to the historians of Greece. An intercourse was long maintained between the philosophers of the latter country and the priesthood of the Nile, which has proved the medium of much valuable information respecting the early kingdoms of Thebes and of the Delta. But the difficulty of penetrating into Ethiopia checked at once the ardour of ambition and the enterprise of science. Neither the arms of Cambyses nor the curiosity of Pythagoras could find a path into the regions of the Bahr el Abiad, so as to lay open all the wonders of Meröc, or to make a full revelation of its learning, ceremonies, and religious faith. Still it is universally admitted that, if we except the ancient inhabitants of Egypt, there is no aboriginal people of Africa who have so many

claims to our attention as the Ethiopians ; a nation which, from the remotest times to the present, has been regarded as one of the most celebrated and the most mysterious. It has been already remarked, that in the earliest traditions of nearly all the civilized tribes of the East the name of this remarkable family of the human race is found ; and when the faint glimmering of fable gives way to the clearer light of history, the lustre of their character appears still undiminished.

To what, it has been asked, shall we attribute this early renown of one of the most sequestered nations of the earth ? How did its fame penetrate the formidable desert by which it is surrounded, and which even now presents an almost insuperable bar to every one who attempts to reach its ancient capital ? To suppose the allusions contained in the oldest of the Grecian poets to be the mere offspring of fancy, will not be allowed by any reader who is at all acquainted with the prevalence of ancient tradition. But if such delineations are more than fiction ; if the reports concerning this wonderful people are founded in truth ; then they become of the greatest importance to history, and possess the strongest claims upon our notice.*

In all old books considerable ambiguity attaches to the term Ethiopian, because it was applied by every order of writers among the Greeks, not so much to denote a country bounded by fixed geographical limits, as to describe the complexion of the inhabitants, whatever might be their position with respect to other nations. Herodotus has recorded a circumstance which is not less true at the present time than it was at the distant period in which he lived. He relates that in the region which extends from the first cataract to Sennaar there were two different classes of people very easily distinguished from each other. The one, described by him

* Heeren's Historical Researches, vol. i. p. 294.

as natives of the soil, he includes under the general appellation of Ethiopians; while the second, which appeared to have sprung from an Arabic race, must have removed into the country at an early epoch, where they continued even in his day to lead a wandering life. That such was the case under the Persian government is evident from what we are told respecting the army of Xerxes, whom they must have attended in his expedition into Greece. The Arabians and Ethiopians are associated by the historians under one leader. "Arsanes, son of Darius by Artystone a daughter of Cyrus, commanded the Arabians and the Ethiopians who came from beyond Egypt." In later times the Arabs seem to have possessed a still higher portion of Nubia, and to have occupied the banks from Philæ to the neighbourhood of Merœ; a fact which is confirmed by Pliny on the authority of Juba the Numidian king, who wrote a work on the geography of Africa.*

It would now be extremely difficult to draw an accurate line of distinction between the original tribes and those whose lineage might with some probability be traced to the Arabian emigrants. The latter have not only dwelt in the land more than 2000 years, and mingled freely with the older stock, but their language also has been so generally adopted by the natives that it can no longer be employed as a decisive characteristic. It has been concluded, however, that all who do not speak Arabic are aboriginal, because it is very unlikely that the Asiatic settlers would exchange their more improved tongue for the rude dialect of barbarous hordes, to whom in all respects they would naturally consider themselves superior. But no one who views all the peculiarities of the case will maintain that, after the lapse of twenty-three centuries, the line of descent can be otherwise

* Herodot. lib. vii. c. 69. Plin. lib. vi. c. 34.

marked than by those physiological qualities in feature and form which neither length of time nor the most intimate mixture can altogether obliterate.

In ascending the Nile above Syené the traveller meets with several other tribes, who it is very probable either belong to the Nubian race, or derive their lineage from a common origin. They are distinguished by a lofty stature and a manly aspect, display the usual symptoms of a warlike disposition, and carry into the field of battle the same kind of weapons which were used by their remote ancestors. They commonly fight on horseback, and are armed with a double-pointed spear, a sword, and a large buckler. Hence the fine passage in the book of Jeremiah, “Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth: the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield.”*

Ethiopia, which was not unknown to the Hebrews in the days of Solomon, is frequently mentioned by the prophets who lived before the captivity. Isaiah, in particular, refers to a circumstance which is noticed by Herodotus as characteristic of a certain portion of the natives. After remarking that it is the extremity of the habitable world, and produces gold in great quantities, elephants with their prodigious teeth, trees and shrubs of every kind, as well as ebony, he adds, “its inhabitants are also the tallest, the handsomest, and the longest-lived of the human race.” The holy seer uses language nearly similar in relation to the same people:—“Thus saith the Lord, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, *men of stature*, shall come over unto thee.” These last are unquestionably the Macrobian, the tall long-lived tribe commemorated by the father of history; for Saba lies on the African coast at the entrance of the Arabian gulf, and con-

sequently in the very spot which, on other grounds, they are supposed to have occupied. The prophet expressly mentions trading nations; the Ethiopians, or inhabitants of Merœe, and the African Sabeans, whose lands supplied an abundance of frankincense. The illustrations which such incidental notices afford to the Sacred Writings are not only curious as literary coincidences, but are also extremely valuable when viewed as presenting a mutual confirmation of the statements to which they refer.*

It is remarkable, too, that the Abyssinians, though perfectly ignorant of the time and circumstances which marked the settlement of their ancestors on the western shore of the Arabian gulf, insist upon connecting their original faith, their civil polity, as well as the pedigree of their royal house, with the fortunes of the Jewish people. The events on which they principally rest these conclusions originated in the visit of the queen of Sheba to Jerusalem, and are described at considerable length in a native work entitled the Chronicle of the Kings. "We write," says the author, "the law and custom of the government of Ibu Hakim, the son of Solomon. With him came the twelve doctors of the law that form the right-hand bench in judgment." He next mentions the other officers of eminence who came along with this prince, such as the master of the horse, high chamber-

* Isaiah xlv. 14. Herodot. lib. iii. c. 114. *ἀνδρας μισγιστους και καλλίστους και μακροβιωτατους.*

It is generally agreed that the Macrobian or long-lived Ethiopians occupied the country which stretches eastward from the straits of Babelmandeb along the African coast. Cosmas, commonly called Indicopleustes, speaks of it as follows:—"The land of frankincense lies at the farthest end of Ethiopia, fifty days' journey from Axum, at no great distance from the ocean, though it does not touch it. The inhabitants of the neighbouring Barbaria, or the country of Sasu, fetch from thence frankincense and other costly spices, which they transport by water to Arabia Felix and India. The country of Sasu is very rich in gold mines; and every year the king of Axum sends some of his people to this place for gold. These are joined by many other merchants; so that altogether they form a caravan of about five hundred persons."—*Cosmas*, p. 138. He wrote about A. D. 535.

lain, and “ he who carried the ten commandments and holy water.” This compilation, of which the authority does not stand high, is sometimes called *Kebir za Neguste*, or glory of the kings. It is regarded indeed by the natives as a faithful repository of the deeds which reflect lustre on their ancestors; though the slightest attention to it will convince the reader that it is the production of an ignorant monk, who, with the sole view of ministering to the vanity of his countrymen, used the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament as the groundwork of a ridiculous fable.*

The chronicle begins with a list of emperors from *Arwe*, or the Serpent, to *Menilec*, the son of Solomon, some of whom are said to have reigned several centuries. From this descendant of the queen of Sheba downwards, the succession has an aspect somewhat more probable, though no dependence can be placed upon its accuracy.

| | Y. | M. | | Y. | M. |
|-----------------|------------|----|----------------------------|----|----|
| Menilec reigned | 29 | 0 | Haduna reigned | 9 | 0 |
| Za Hendarbyn - | 1 | 0 | Za Wasih - | 1 | 0 |
| Awda - | 11 | 0 | Za-Dir - | 2 | 0 |
| Za Awsyn - | 3 | 0 | Za Awzena - | 1 | 0 |
| Za Tsawe | 3 | 10 | Za Berwas - | 29 | 0 |
| Zagesyn | half a day | | Za Mahazi - | 1 | 0 |
| Za Mante - | 8 | 4 | Za Baese Bazen | 16 | 0 |
| Za Bahse - | 9 | 0 | And in the eighth year of | | |
| Kawude - | 2 | 0 | his reign Christ was born. | | |
| Kanazi - | 10 | 0 | | | |

In a subsequent part of the catalogue is found *Zahekale*, which is without doubt the name of the sovereign who reigned in Abyssinia at the time when the *Periplus* of the Ery-

* Bruce's Travels, vol. iii. p. 1.

threan Sea was written. The author of that work, adopting the slight modification required by the Greek language, calls him Zoskales; and according to the native document just quoted, he is represented as having ruled between the years 76 and 79 of the Christian era. It is an extraordinary circumstance that this date should agree very nearly with the period to which Dr Vincent has attributed the publication of that celebrated treatise by Arrian; namely the tenth year of Nero, or A. D. 64. The difference is not more than twelve years; and assuredly this coincidence, which cannot fail to appear singular, adds a very important confirmation to both accounts.*

In the same list, extracted from the Chronicle, are the names of the princes who swayed the sceptre when the Axumites were converted to the Christian faith. From the narrative of Rufinus and other ecclesiastical writers, it is manifest that the person named Frumentius was the Abba Salama or Fremonatos, as he is elsewhere denominated, who after having resided some time in Abyssinia was raised to the rank of a bishop by Athanasius the patriarch of Alexandria. It subsequently appears that during the following reign, when the Arians gained the ascendancy, the Emperor Constantius sent an embassy through Theophilus an Indian, with a letter addressed to the ruling sovereigns Aizana and Saizana, for the purpose of persuading Frumentius to relinquish the doctrines of his patron, and to adopt those of Georgius, his successor in the Episcopal see.

That such monarchs governed Ethiopia is clearly proved by the inscription recently discovered at Axum; and though there may be some slight chronological difficulties to overcome, there is little doubt that the names of the two princes who exercised a joint authority in the year 356 have been

* Salt's Abyssinia, p. 463.

satisfactorily ascertained. It may therefore be presumed that the accuracy of the Chronicle at the earlier period with which we are more immediately concerned, rests on a basis equally worthy of confidence ; and that, though the dynasty of Abyssinian kings cannot be traced to the son of Solomon, the order of their succession and the dates of their reigns may be found quite consistent with historical truth.*

We have hitherto proceeded on the supposition that the Ethiopians were an older people than the Egyptians, and that the country below the cataracts was supplied with inhabitants by means of colonists who gradually descended from their settlements on the banks of the Upper Nile. But this opinion is not every where received, and is even considered by some writers as entirely destitute of foundation. A similar difference prevails in the conclusions which have been formed as to the lineage of the Ethiopians ; for while one class of authors maintain that they are of Arabian extraction, another insists that they are either aboriginal, or derived from a family of Libyans who had migrated from the more central parts of Africa. Those who are desirous to examine the grounds upon which these several judgments are made to rest will have their curiosity gratified by consulting the works cited below.†

Suffice it to mention, that there is among the Abyssinians a tradition which they have had from time immemorial, and is equally well received by Jews and Christians, namely, that almost immediately after the Flood, Cush, grandson of Noah, passing through Atbara with his family from the low coun-

* The inscription alluded to was discovered, or at least decyphered, by Mr Salt. See his *Abyssinia*, pp. 411—464.

† Bruce's *Travels*, vol. ii. Appendix ; vol. vii. Appendix. Salt's *Abyssinia*, p. 458. Lord Valentia's *Travels*, vol. iii. p. 242. Schultens, *Histor. Joktanidarum in Arabia Felice*.

try of Egypt, then without inhabitants, came to the ridge of mountains which separates the alluvial plains from the high land of Ethiopia. It is added, that being terrified by the recollection of the Flood, still a recent event, and apprehensive of being again involved in a similar calamity, they chose for their residence caves in the sides of the hills rather than trust themselves near the level of the water. Delighted with the fertile soil which distinguishes the neighbourhood of Merœ, they are supposed to have settled there, and afterwards to have erected that capital so much celebrated as the principal seat of religion and commerce among the Ethiopian Cushites. The Abyssinian legend farther states, that in the early days of the patriarch Abraham they built the city of Axum, though there are good reasons for supposing that the work was accomplished at a period still more remote. The fragments of colossal statues which mark the site of this ancient metropolis have been viewed as indicating the objects of worship venerated by the original settlers; a species of sabaism, or adoration of the heavenly host, the very superstition into which the descendants of Noah allowed themselves to be insensibly betrayed.*

Of the ancient history of Arabia little has reached our times on which any reliance can be placed, if we except the few notices to be gleaned from the pages of the sacred volume. But as the people of that country have not made any pretensions to the extravagant antiquity claimed by the Indians, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians, it might seem that few difficulties would be encountered in relating the actions or enumerating the reigns of their early monarchs. They indeed undertake to trace the long line of their princes to some of the patriarchs who first peopled the postdiluvian world; and in asserting this honour, they are supported as

* Bruce's *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 303. The tradition here mentioned is found in the Appendix to the *Kebir za Neguste*, or *Book of Axum*.

well by their own traditions as by the apparent authority of the inspired writings. We therefore enter upon the annals of the Arabian tribes with a degree of reliance not to be bestowed on the legends of those other nations that boast an origin far more remote, without sufficient documents to prove the validity of their claims, some of which are advanced in direct opposition to the unquestionable testimony of the Hebrew historian and lawgiver.

But the confidence with which we commence the research into Arabian antiquities is not fully justified by the character of the records adduced by native authors. As soon as we inquire by what means they could have transmitted to them through a long succession of ages the memory of times which, though not fabulous, are yet so distant from the present, we see grounds for questioning the truth of their narratives. They cannot make an appeal to written authorities older than the era of their Prophet. Verses, no doubt, said to be of remoter date, are still recited among the lovers of traditional literature; and in some of these compositions traces of ancient events are supposed to be found. They likewise vaunt the accuracy of their genealogical tables and the authenticity of their domestic registers; but the mind reluctantly gives credit to historical relations resting on no surer grounds than those, and refuses to confide in reports described as being handed down from father to son through more than a hundred generations.

Nor will this reasonable scepticism be greatly diminished by a more intimate acquaintance with Arabian writers. However well disposed to believe in the traditions they report, the reader soon finds himself perplexed by their contradictory evidence. In desiring to recognise their good faith, he is in the first instance surprised at the minuteness of some of the details into which they enter, while speaking of persons concerning whom no writings ever existed, and

who had been dead more than thirty centuries before these chroniclers of their deeds were born. Again, he finds it necessary to withhold belief from those fictions of the imagination so abundantly created by Arabian vanity, and to reject as altogether unworthy of his regard the fabulous exaggerations in which the fancy of the orientals has at all times delighted to indulge. In a word, he will discover that the true and the false, the probable and the incredible, are closely blended together in all the narratives by means of which they endeavour to set forth the antiquity, the exploits, and the triumphs of their ancestors.*

In the tenth chapter of Genesis it is related that “Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, and Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the east.” It may be concluded that from Mesha, or Muza, the mountain here mentioned, they gradually extended their dominion over the southern part of the Arabian peninsula; an opinion which may be held without any hesitation, since some of the names of Joktan’s family, Saba and Hazarmaveth, are associated at the present day with several cities and districts in Arabia Felix.

Joktan, who by the Arabians is denominated Kahtan, is said to have been the first, after the confusion of languages and the dispersion of the sons of Noah, who fixed his abode in Yemen. He is also represented as the first who assumed the regal diadem in that country, while others maintain that the title of sovereign was not used till the time of Saba, or of Homeir his son, who is generally known by the name of Hamyar. But while authors are thus at variance with each

* Origines, vol. ii, p. 279.

other about the first king who reigned in Yemen after the Flood, and differ among themselves whether Kahtan, Saba, or Homeir was first decorated with a crown, they admit that certain tribes possessed the country before the Joktanidæ. Other Arabian writers have indeed distinctly asserted that Kahtan was the last of those primitive patriarchs whose families were established in their land. One of them relates that Arabia was originally peopled by ten families sprung from Aad, Themud, Tasm, Jadis, Amalek, Emim, Wabar, Jasm, and Kahtan ; and later authorities seem to recognise the establishment of some of them in the southern part of the peninsula, prior to that of the sons of Joktan. Abulfeda, for example, speaking of Hamyar, who was only the third in descent from Kahtan, says, that he drove the posterity of Themud out of Yemen into Hejaz. He likewise clearly asserts that the Aadites and Amalekites, in particular, inhabited Hadramaut and Yemen immediately after the confusion of tongues. It is subjoined by another compiler, that Habshan expelled out of the provinces of Oman, Bahrin, and Yemen, all that remained of the tribes of Aad, Themud, Sachar, Jasm, Wabar, Tasm, and Jadis ; a statement which naturally leads to the supposition that the clans thus indicated were the most ancient possessors of the country. The author of the book of Mezhar goes so far as to say that the descendants of Kahtan were not pure Arabians ; and that by degrees they either extirpated the original owners of the soil, or drove them from their habitations. According to Abulfaragius, also, this people, even since the commencement of their authentic history, may be confidently divided into two classes. To the first of these belonged the more primitive families who are now extinct, and to the second the tribes which still continue to occupy the land. The former are represented to have been very numerous, especially those descended from Aad, Themud, Tasm, and Jadis. The latter,

sprung from a double stem, are regarded as owing their origin to Kahtan and Adnan.*

The Arabians pretend that Aad was the son of Uz, who in the tenth chapter of Genesis is said to be the son of Aram, the son of Shem. He was therefore in the fourth generation after Noah. His descendants established themselves in Yemen and Hadramaut; but their dominion over those provinces was of short duration. They as well as the Themudites are described as giants who worshipped three idols; on which account God, after sending without success the prophet Hud to convert them, destroyed a great number of the most obstinate transgressors by means of a pestilential wind which blew seven days and nights. The son of Joktan, the son of Heber, agreeably to the narrative of the sacred historian, obtained possession of the country which is understood to have contained the two provinces above mentioned; and this part of the narrative corresponds with that given by the Arabians, who fix the era when the Aadites were destroyed to the time of Heber, whose son, they admit, succeeded to the vacant inheritance.

So far the Arabian traditions trace the first families that inhabited their country to the persons named in the tenth chapter of the book of Genesis, to Uz, Gether, and Lud. These patriarchs, it is obvious, were anterior in point of time to Joktan, as must also have been their sons; and the only difficulty which seems to occur is with regard to Amalek who is elsewhere mentioned as the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, several generations later. But Abulfeda removes this apparent discrepancy by reminding his readers that the Amalek, from whom were descended the Amalekites of Yemen, was the son of Lud and not the grandson of Isaac.

* Origines, vol. ii. p. 284. Pocock's *Abulfaragius*. Abulfeda in *Tracts* published by M. Silvestre de Sacy. Ibn Said in *Abulfeda*. Nuweiri *Hist. Reg. Arab.* Schultens, *Hist. Joktanidarum*.

Hence it appears that in the Arabian genealogies, as they respect the origin of the principal families from which their tribes are sprung, there is nothing inconsistent either with Scripture or probability. It is true indeed that the sacred historian does not name the sons of Uz, Gether, and Lud; but to account for this omission it has been suggested, that in the time of Moses the tribes which had owed their rise to those patriarchs were nearly extirpated. The family of Joktan had already obtained the sole dominion of the greater part of Arabia Felix; and therefore the Hebrew legislator might very reasonably pass over individuals no longer important in the history of the world, though the native authors thought fit to preserve their memory as intimately connected with their own early annals.

It is remarkable that the Arabian chroniclers make hardly any allusion to Ham as one of the progenitors of their nation, but confine their genealogical details almost entirely to the line of Shem. No one can doubt that several descendants of that son of Noah, through Cush, were established in the peninsula from the earliest periods of history. In truth, the whole country is frequently called Cush in the Sacred Writings; and several cities, including extensive districts, were, as we have already noticed, named after his progeny, Havilah, Sheba, and Dedan. But the domestic annalists make no mention of the Hamites among the original founders of their tribes; affecting rather to trace their lineage to the more pious son of the great patriarch.

The same writers, it has been observed, confine their attention to the posterity of Joktan in the line of Saba, though the tribes of Almodad and Jerah rose to considerable eminence in the land, and have even left in the designations of certain provinces and flourishing towns traces of their power which are not yet obliterated. But the sceptre of Yemen was swayed for many ages by the off-

spring of Saba ; and hence the actions and even the names of the other descendants of the son of Heber were overlooked or forgotten. The following list of sovereigns, beginning at Joktan and extending to the reign of Saiph Ibn Dhu Yasan, who was contemporary with the Greek emperor Heraclius, is taken from Pocock, who, in his notes on Abulfaragius, has followed Abulfeda, Al Jannabi, and Ahsmed Ibn Yuseph :—

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Kahtan. | 23. Zasasin. |
| 2. Yarab. | 24. Shamar. |
| 3. Yeshab. | 25. Abimelek. |
| 4. Saba. | 26. Amran. |
| 5. Homeir. | 27. Amru. |
| 6. Wayel or Wathel. | 28. Alakran. |
| 7. Sacsac. | 29. Dhu Habshan. |
| 8. Japhar or Yaphar. | 30. Toba. |
| 9. Riash. | 31. Colaccarb. |
| 10. Nooman or Moafer. | 32. Abu Karb Asad. |
| 11. Asmah. | 33. Hassan Ibn Toba. |
| 12. Shedad. | 34. Amru. |
| 13. Lokman. | 35. Abd Kolal. |
| 14. Dhu Sadad. | 36. Toba Hassan. |
| 15. Hareth El Raich. | 37. Hareth Ibn Amru. |
| 16. Asab. | 38. Morthed. |
| 17. Abrahah. | 39. Wakiah or Waliah. |
| 18. Aphricus. | 40. Abrahah Ibn Alsabah. |
| 19. Alphaidar. | 41. Sahban. |
| 20. Amru Dsu. | 42. Amru. |
| 21. Alhadhad. | 43. Dhu Sanater. |
| 22. Belkis, a queen. | 44. Dhu Nowas. |

Dhu Nowas was the last descendant of Homeir who sat on the throne of Saba. Gloomy and morose in his temper,

his natural severity was sharpened by religious zeal ; for becoming a convert to Judaism he persecuted with unrelenting cruelty the enemies of his adopted creed. Viewed by his subjects in the odious light of a ferocious tyrant and intolerant bigot, he found himself unable to resist the king of Ethiopia, who, crossing the Red sea at the head of a large army, entered upon a career of conquest. Nowas, defeated in a general action, sought refuge in flight ; but despairing of safety, and determined not to fall alive into the hands of his pursuers, he threw himself from a precipice into the waves, where he instantly perished.

It is maintained by Arabian authorities that their king Hamyar was contemporary with Kedar the son of Ishmael, though the former was only of the ninth generation after the Flood, while the latter belonged to the twelfth. At first sight therefore this argument appears untenable, and it is not till the great longevity of those times is considered that the reader feels inclined to admit the probability that the Sabeen ruler and the grandson of Abraham might live at the same period. Ishmael died in the 137th year of his age ; and if Hamyar lived as long, he might also be contemporary with Esau, the brother of Jacob. Nay, an attempt has been made by a learned author to prove that the prince of Yemen and the eldest son of Isaac were the same person. It is well known that Esau was also called Edom ; and this term in Hebrew has the same meaning that Hamyar bears in Arabic ; they both denote the quality of Red as applied to the appearance of the human body. The argument now alluded to, as used to establish the identity of the two Arabian sovereigns, proceeds as follows.

The usual life of man at that remote period extended to a century and a half. Jacob reached the age of 147 ; and Esau had already seen 98 years when he went to dwell in Mount Seir. As nothing more is said of him in Scripture,

he may have removed 15 years afterwards into Yemen and taken possession of that country. Neither is it improbable that he may have resided there 50 years; and on this supposition all chronological difficulties as to the sameness of Edom and Hamyar are entirely removed.

The Arabians say indeed that the latter was the eldest son of Saba. But if this relationship were well founded, it would be difficult to understand how Kahtan, a younger son of the same monarch, could pretend to have an equal right to the throne with Wathel, the son of Hamyar, and how he should have prevailed upon the legitimate heir so far to divide the kingdom with him as to cede the whole region of Hadramaut. Besides, it is manifest that continual struggles took place for the supreme power between the descendants of Homeir and those of Kahtan; a fact which seems to indicate the different origin of the two dynasties.

Again, the inhabitants of Yemen were frequently denominated Sabeans, but not less commonly Homeirites. Whence arose this double appellation? If Homeir had been the son of Saba, the Homeirites must necessarily have been Sabeans. May it not then be suspected that these inhabitants of Yemen were a mingled people, some of whose tribes were descended from Hamyar and others from Saba; and that between those two personages there was no nearer consanguinity than might be traced to Heber their common ancestor.

Esau was possessed of numerous flocks and herds, and in his days Arabia must have been still thinly peopled. When he had established some of his children in the northern parts, he may have sought with the remainder the fertile regions of the south. He had married a daughter of Ishmael, the sister of Nabaioth; and if he engaged in any expedition against the royal house of Joktan he would probably be assisted by the numerous clan with whom he was now allied.

The Arabians knew Esau by the name of Ais; and

Kessæus says, that a ruler distinguished by this title married a daughter of the king of Ethiopia, by whom he had two sons. But it is obvious that, in order to give the least degree of probability to this tradition, we must suppose that Esau had quitted the mountains of Seir and the land of Edom to establish himself in the southern part of the peninsula, whence he could easily have had communication with the Ethiopians across the narrow channel of the Red sea. This legend, in fact, seems to imply that Esau had actually settled in Yemen.

The same Kessæus relates a story which, though abundantly absurd, brings the farther aid of tradition in support of the hypothesis we are now considering. Jacob is said to have foretold to his brother that he should be the progenitor of Dhu al Karnain, the "Lord of the two Horns;" a designation which the Arabians originally applied to one of the kings of Yemen, who, according to Abulfeda, was descended from Homeir or the Red.

Yarab the son of Joktan is represented to have brought the pure Arabic into Yemen, and to have deflected it from the Syriac. If Homeir had been the descendant of Yarab, he would naturally have spoken the same language as his great-grandfather who had introduced the new dialect. It is remarkable, then, that the progeny of Homeir used so much Syriac or Chaldaic in their common speech that their conversation was not understood by the other Arabians. Pocock and D'Herbelot have preserved an anecdote which proves the difference in the tongues now mentioned. A stranger was introduced to one of the Homeirite kings who happened at the moment to be reclining on the brink of a precipice. The prince, wishing to do honour to the member of another tribe, desired him to sit down; but the term *theb*, which in Syriac expressed the proper meaning of the sovereign, signified in the Arabic the action of leaping. As a

literal obedience is in all cases an indispensable mark of deference in an eastern court, the visiter instantly threw himself from the height and lost his life. Now, it is remarked by the advocate for the identity of Homeir and Edom, if these were only two different names for the same person, we can understand how his descendants should have spoken a dialect different from that of the other Arabians, and more mingled with Chaldaic and Syriac words.

The native writers admit that Isaac in blessing Esau prayed to God that he might be the progenitor of kings and emperors, and they add that he had a son called Rom, from whom sprang the princes of Greece and Italy. On the same ground they attempt to establish the fact that Romulus derived his name from the house of Edom, and even that Alexander the Great was a descendant of the same patriarch. Sennacherib, too, is supposed to have owed his royal blood to a similar extraction, and of course to have shared with the Hebrews the honour of enrolling Abraham among his ancestors. These absurd fictions it is manifest may be all ascribed to the pride of lineage so deeply cherished by the Arabians. The inhabitants of Yemen pretend that their race is pure, being descended from Joktan, while the other tribes hold that they are sprung from Ishmael. As to the posterity of Ham in the line of Cush ; as well as that of the father of the faithful by Keturah ; and of the numerous families which draw their origin from Esau, they choose to remain silent. In short, they do not consider them as Arabians in the more honourable sense of the expression ; and accordingly it would be quite inconsistent with all their notions of pure extraction to acknowledge that the first-born son of Rebecca had ever settled in Yemen. They do not indeed refuse to respect his memory as the forefather of princes, because they cannot deny that Idumea belongs to Arabia ; but they remember that he was deprived of the blessing which he considered as

his birthright, and they would reluctantly confess their descent from one who had not been favoured by God with the high destination conferred upon his brother. The real truth has therefore been concealed, because all the inhabitants of Yemen wish to be regarded as sprung from a more ancient, and, as they think, a more honourable race. They are acquainted with the Pentateuch; they even venerate the Jewish scriptures; but if to gratify their own prejudices they hesitate not to alter the sacred genealogies, it may be supposed that they would be still more ready to invent where the inspired historian is silent.*

The reasoning now stated is certainly not free from very strong and obvious objections; but on a subject surrounded with so much obscurity it is not undeserving of attention, viewed as an attempt to illustrate the antiquities of a people so closely connected with the Hebrew tribes in their origin, manners, and opinions.

Yemen was not the only kingdom founded by the family of Joktan, for when Yarab mounted the throne of his paternal dominions, Joram, his brother, established himself in the neighbouring province of Hejaz. The two patriarchs just named are understood to be the Yareh and Yobab of the Scriptures, though it is admitted that Joram bears no resemblance to any of the appellations enumerated in the Book of Genesis. No doubt, however, is entertained that

* Sir W. Drummond's *Origines*, vol. ii. p. 343. The reader will find his *διωτικαὶ φροντίδες* on this subject in a postscript added to the third chapter of his Second Book. The substance of his argument is given above, of which he states the conclusion in the following words:—"There is nothing said in the Bible of Esau after he went to dwell in Mount Seir. He might in the course of a few years have changed his habitation. It indeed appears to me so little probable that Edom, *Red*, ruled in one part of Arabia, where he was known by that Syriac name, while known by an Arabic denomination, *Hameir*, *Red*, reigned in another part of that country, that I am inclined to think that the former migrated from the north to the south, where his name was translated from the Syriac into the Arabic dialect."

his descendants continued to enjoy sovereign power in Hejaz down to the reign of Modad the Second, who was the eleventh in succession from the first ruler. In the time of this prince Ishmael is said to have arrived at his court and married his daughter ; and it is much contested among historians whether after this period the country was ruled by the progeny of Abraham, or whether it remained under the sway of the Joramites. Some insist that the government was retained by the latter ; but that the former were intrusted with the keys of the sacred edifice or temple, and were constituted the guardians of that place of worship. Others assert that Kedar, the son of Ishmael, was elevated to the kingly office in right of his mother, whose relations consented to place on his head the royal diadem.*

The supremacy of the Ishmaelites continued till the time of Nabet, when the line of Joram again returned to power. It is not easy to determine the precise relationship which Nabet bore to the founder of his family, whether he was removed from him in the second or third degree ; but, in order to give consistency to the narrative countenanced by Abulfeda, it will be necessary to suppose that he was a different person from the Nabaioth mentioned in Scripture. The posterity of Joktan appear to have retained the throne of Hejaz in great tranquillity till the emigration of the Azdites from Saba, when such changes took place in various parts of Arabia as proved fatal to some of the most ancient dynasties.

Amru, the son of Amer, having retired from Yemen a short time before the city now mentioned was destroyed by an inundation, went in search of a place of residence, accompanied by his family and the greater part of his tribe. This host of

* Abulfeda, whose narrative furnishes the authority for these statements, alludes to the famous Kaaba at Mecca, which the Mahometans believe was built by Abraham and Ishmael.

emigrants passed into the kingdom of Hejaz, when Samalah, supposed to be an Ishmaelite, was at the head of affairs ; who, not suspecting any danger, gave permission to the strangers to take up their temporary abode in the region where was the well or water of Gazan, between the rivers Zabad and Rama. Amru then sent three of his sons, Hareth, Malek, and Harethah, to discover a spot where he and his followers might finally settle. But the father died before his messengers returned, and was succeeded by his son Thalabah, whom he had retained at the seat of government. Soon after this event a certain Azdite killed Samalah, the king of the country, and thereby gave occasion to a war which proved extremely disastrous to the native inhabitants. The Azdite prince, indignant at such conduct on the part of his people, who had thus repaid kindness by an act of the basest treason, determined to quit a territory which, having been acquired by fraud, could not be retained without dishonour. He then departed with the more faithful of his adherents, and arrived at Mecca, where the Joramites still retained some degree of authority. From that city he removed to a valley in the neighbourhood, and requested permission to form for himself a permanent dwelling. The sons of Joram refused to accede to this proposal ; hostilities ensued, and the Azdites, having triumphed in the field, took possession of the capital.

From these revolutions arose the power of the Khozaïtes, and ultimately, perhaps, the small principalities of Hira and Gazan ; but as they were posterior to the age of David and Solomon, their history does not claim our consideration. There are, however, two races whose names are famous in the East as well as in the West, concerning which it may be proper to introduce at this stage of the narrative a few observations. I allude to the Hagarenes and Saracens, the

former of whom are usually described as being descended from Hagar, the handmaid of Abraham's wife.

If this tribe of Arabians were the offspring of Ishmael, we should, in tracing their history under a new name, find ourselves pursuing the phantom of a distinction where there is no real difference. But according to Aben-Ezra the Hagarenes were not Ishmaelites : they were the children of the same mother by a second husband or master. The opinion now given is found in a commentary on the eighty-third psalm, where by the sacred writer the Ishmaelites and Hagarenes are certainly distinguished from each other, as also from the tabernacles of Edom, of Moab, of Gebal, Ammon, and the Amalekites. The etymology of the term has however been questioned, chiefly on the ground that there is no example of any of the Arabian tribes tracing their origin to a female. The maxim "*familia matris non est familia*" applied to that people not less strictly than to the Jews. Neither does there any where appear the slightest reason for suspecting that the Ishmaelites were ashamed of their patriarch, and chose to be known rather as the descendants of Hagar than of her son.*

It has therefore been conjectured that the Hagarites who are mentioned in the First Book of Chronicles were the same people whom Strabo and Ptolemy designate Agraïans, and who, according to these authors, inhabited Arabia Petræa. In the section of the Old Testament just specified, the tribe in question is represented as having dwelt in tents throughout the whole region which lies eastward of the land of Gilead.†

Sir William Drummond suggests that the Hagarim of

* Origines, vol. ii. p. 393.

† 1 Chronicles v. 10, 19, 20; xxvii. 31. "And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagarites, who fell by their hand : and they dwelt in their tents throughout all the east land of Gilead."

the Hebrews and the Agraïans of the Greeks may have been so denominated from Hagar, the principal town of the region which they occupied. The ancient Arabic name of the city, which the writers of Athens and Rome called Petra, was Hagiär, which likewise signifies a rock or stone. The natives however assign to the province so called a much greater extent than was given by the classical authors to Arabia Petraea; some of them including in it the wide countries of Shem and Irak.

As certain antiquaries have thought fit to derive the appellation of Hagarenes from Hagar the concubine of Abraham, others have imagined that the Saracens so denominated themselves because they pretended to be the descendants of Sarah, the lawful wife of the same patriarch. This hypothesis is alluded to by Saint Jerome, who denounces the claim as not less groundless than ridiculous; but the Arabians themselves, if they ever indulged such dreams as to their extraction, have long laid them aside as unworthy of a serious defence.*

It has been usual among certain orientalists to derive the epithet Saracen from an Arabic term which means to steal. Hence it must be imagined to have been imposed upon them by their neighbours, and not voluntarily assumed, inasmuch as no nation would ascribe to themselves habits associated with odium and disgrace. Robbery, it is true, if perpetrated on a large scale, has never been held dishonourable in the country inhabited by the sons of Ishmael and the descendants of Esau, who were doomed even from the earliest times to live by their swords, and to raise their hands against all other tribes of mankind. But the Saracens, a fierce and warlike people, were more likely to be denounced as spoilers

* Hieron. in Ezek. xxv. Isidorus, Orig. lib. ix., says, "Ismäel filius Abrahami, a quo Ismäelitæ, qui nunc corrupto nomine Saraceni, quasi a Sara, et Agareni ab Agar."

than as thieves, being more disposed to take by violence than to remove by stealth.*

Influenced by such considerations, others have deduced the appellation from *Sharki*, which signifies eastern, and mention in support of their views that there are some villages in Arabia called *Sharakah* and *Sharakiah*. But in opposition to this reasoning it is urged that a tribe of Saracens occupy Yemen, and that it is not easy to perceive on what grounds the inhabitants of Arabia Felix or even of Petraea should be denominated orientalis. The former possessed the interior portion of the peninsula, apparently the province of Hejaz; and with regard to the situation of the latter, we are informed by Ptolemy that in the stony Arabia there were certain eminences called the Black Mountains which extended from the bay near Pharan to Judea, and that westward between those mountains and Egypt were the Saracens. It is not probable, therefore, that either of these clans would be described by the rest of their countrymen as dwellers in the east.†

An ingenious attempt to discover the origin of a name at once celebrated and formidable has been made on the following principles. The reader will remember that when Amru the son of Amer led his Azdites from Saba, they stopped at the waters of Gazan, where he died. The departure of Thalabah his successor, and the war which ensued with the natives, have been also described, as well as the fatal consequences resulting from it to the interests of the latter. The defeated party were the descendants of Ashar or Shar, and

* Scaliger is the author of the derivation noticed above. Pocock, without naming him, asks "a quibus hoc nomen Saracenis inditum? Non ab ipsis," he replies, "qui famæ suæ pepercissent; sin ab aliis, sua potius lingua quam Arabum quibus hoc ad opprobrium sonat, locuturos fuisse credibile est."

† Pocock favours this etymology; and Sir W. Drummond remarks, that he might have quoted the authority of Stephanus Byzantinus, who says, Σάρακα, χωρὶς Ἀραβίας μετα τοὺς Ναβαταίους· οἱ δικοῦντις Σαρακηνῶν. See also Bochart, lib. iv. c. 2.

were called Shariin. They afterwards united themselves to the family of Ak, who, according to Ibn Hesham, established his followers on the borders of Yemen, where he intermarried with the children of Shar; which facts seem to warrant the inference that the progeny of these friendly tribes Shar and Ak might be afterwards denominated Sharakin.*

The indiscriminate use of the term must no doubt be attributed to the vague notions of the Greek and Latin authors, who confounded under one appellation all the Arabians who dwell in tents or lead a wandering life in the great desert. Nor is it improbable that their name may have arisen from the form of their habitation, and passed through a gradual corruption from Skenites, a word of Grecian origin, and descriptive of the moveable villages used by the nomadic tribes in their wonted occupation of tending their cattle.†

It is more easy to account for the circumstance that the Saracens were long an object of terror and abhorrence to every Christian. They were unquestionably a fierce and uncivilized people, and like most of the other Bedouin Arabs openly addicted to robbery. Judea was at all times exposed

* The author of the *Origines* has suggested this explanation, which to most readers will appear more ingenious than satisfactory. Gibbon, whose research is worthy of all praise, recapitulates briefly in a note the various attempts which had been made prior to his day to trace the term Saracen to an intelligible source. "The name which, used by Ptolemy and Pliny in a more confined, by Ammianus and Procopius in a larger sense, has been derived ridiculously from *Sarah* the wife of Abraham, obscurely from the village of *Saraka*, more plausibly from the Arabic words which signify a *thievish* character, or *oriental* situation. Yet the last and most popular of these etymologies is refuted by Ptolemy, who expressly remarks the western and southern position of the Saracens, then an obscure tribe on the borders of Egypt. The appellation cannot therefore allude to any *national* character; and since it was composed by strangers, it must be found not in the Arabic but in a foreign language."—*Decline and Fall*, vol. ix. p. 233.

† The *Σαρακηνικά φυλά* are described by Menander as being for the most part *ἡρημονομοὶ καὶ ἀδισπότοι*—as shepherds in the wilderness who acknowledge no master. (Excerpt. Legat. p. 149.)

to their predatory incursions, and more especially after the Roman conquest, when it was torn by domestic dissensions and oppressed by foreign rulers. Even down to the era of Saint Jerome the borders of Palestine were infested by those barbarians; nor can it be imagined that the Christians who first passed into Hejaz and Yemen to spread the light of divine truth escaped unmolested through the barren wilds over which such tyrants dominated. By their geographical situation they were placed at the gate of Arabia, by which that country is most easily entered from Egypt as well as from the Holy Land; and their proximity to both must have brought them into frequent collision with the missionaries of the church, whether from Alexandria or Jerusalem. It is related by Eusebius that a numerous body of Christians, fleeing from the persecution excited against them at home, took refuge on a mountain in Arabia, where they were all made captives by the Saracens; an event not likely to be forgotten by men who were still struggling for the maintenance of their religious opinions against the power and obstinacy of the Roman emperors.

Thus in the first ages of the gospel did the character of those Bedouins become notorious in the eastern parts of Europe; and their name was by degrees extended to all the wandering hordes who pitch their tents between Elath and Bosra. At a later period, the nations of the west, misled by ignorance not less than by prejudice, confounded all the different denominations of Arabians into one mass; and when at length the disciples of Mohammed carried their empire to India on the one hand and to the columns of Hercules on the other, the soldiers of the Cross still called them Saracens, unconscious perhaps of any error, and assuredly not meaning any reproach.*

* Origines, vol. ii. p. 406. Asseman. Bibliot. Oriental. tom. iii. p. 500. Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. vi. c. 36—39.

This outline of the ancient history of Arabia would not be complete were no notice to be taken of the literature and science which at a very early period distinguished its inhabitants. It has been remarked by a learned author, that throughout the whole of the Hebrew writings Idumea is regarded by the Jews, with respect to elegance and accomplishment, in much the same light as Greece was viewed by the Romans; and in short that Teman, one of the towns in that district, was extolled as the Athens of Arabia Petræa. The prophet Jeremiah, for example, anticipating the desolations which were to befall the descendants of Ishmael, exclaims “concerning Edom, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Is wisdom no more in Teman? Is counsel perished from the prudent? Is their wisdom vanished?” And Obadiah in like manner records against them the purposes of Jehovah, saying, “Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed.”*

The most remarkable of the literary productions that have reached the present age from the depths of an antiquity which cannot now be measured is the Book of Job; a work which all classes of men have agreed to admire, while they differ not only as to the age when it first appeared, the object with which it was written, but even as to the author by whom it was composed. The greatest critics and the most learned commentators are found ranged on opposite sides; a circumstance which, though it may weaken our confidence in the most plausible conclusions, nevertheless seems to justify a brief review of the arguments on which those conclusions are founded.

In a former section of this work the reader will find some remarks on the period at which the eloquent composition in-

scribed with the name of *Job* is supposed to have been penned. It was the opinion of the celebrated Warburton that the writer could not have lived prior to the Babylonian captivity, because throughout his poem he gives evidence that he was acquainted with the existence and history of Satan ; a species of knowledge, the bishop alleges, which was not communicated to the chosen people until after they had been carried away by their Assyrian conquerors. This inference, drawn by the learned author of the *Divine Legation of Moses*, rests on the assumption that, anterior to the event now mentioned, the history of moral evil, as connected with the principalities and powers of darkness, had not been revealed to such of the Hebrews as derived all their theology from the study of the Pentateuch. The finding Satan in the scene is, he maintains, a strong proof that the Book of *Job* was composed after the return of the Jews from the banks of the Euphrates, because this evil Being was little known to them till about that time. Their great lawgiver, he adds, where he frequently enumerates and warns them of the snares and temptations which would draw them to transgress the law of God, never once mentioned that capital enemy of Heaven ; yet this was an expedient which the wisest Pagan legislators thought of use to keep the populace in the ways of virtue. “ Nay, when the end of that sacred history which Moses composed obliged him to treat of Satan’s grand machination against mankind, he entirely hides this wicked spirit under the animal which he made his instrument. On the return from the captivity we find him better known ; and things are then ascribed to him as the immediate and proper author, which (while Providence thought proper to keep back the knowledge of him) were before given in an improper sense to the first and ultimate cause of all things.”*

* Warburton’s *Divine Legation*, Book vi. sec. 2.

But a little reflection will make manifest that the conclusion of the ingenious prelate is very ill supported by the facts upon which it is grounded. Had the Book of Job been written after the captivity, it is almost certain that the evil spirit would not have been introduced into the presence of Jehovah to receive a commission to afflict the most perfect man upon earth ; because, as the bishop himself observes, the Hebrews on their return from Babylon were wont to “ ascribe things to Satan as the immediate and proper author, which were before given in an improper sense to the first and ultimate cause of all things.” The afflictions of the man of Uz are by his inspired biographer attributed to a direct and positive warrant on the part of Jehovah granted to Satan as his instrument—a statement which certainly accords much better with the simple theology that prevailed in the remotest patriarchal times, than with the more technical system of opinions brought by the Jews from the land of their servitude. The malignant emissary who was let loose against the Arabian sage bears hardly any resemblance to the prince of the devils, who at a later period is described as opposing his kingdom to that of Heaven, and waging an incessant war against the plans and servants of the Omnipotent. The accuser who vented his malice upon Job accompanied the holier spirits into the presence of the great Father of the universe, listened to questions, and showed himself ready to obey commands ; and such was not the character of the master-demon whom the Hebrews, after the days of Ezra, were accustomed to dread as the enemy of God and man.*

According to the primeval religion of Arabia, all orders of spiritual beings were considered as emanations from the Supreme Deity, to whom consequently they all stood in the

* See Connection of Sacred and Profane History, vol. i. p. 263.

relation of sons. Even the undutiful and disobedient were understood to retain their rank as Intelligences originally divine. Their high descent did not altogether preclude the contamination of evil thoughts or malignant feelings; and even the Jews found no difficulty in believing that a spirit might go forth from the presence of Jehovah and become the prompter of falsehood in the mouths of a hundred prophets.*

In truth, as has been already suggested, so far as any conclusion can be founded on notices at once scanty and incidental, we may perhaps venture to state, that the opinions entertained by the posterity of Abraham, whether in Arabia or Palestine, with regard to supernatural agency, did not exclude from the service of the Almighty the ministrations even of those less benevolent spirits whose office it was, according to the ideas of a simple age, to convey to the bar of heaven a record of human guilt, and to return thence with power and authority to punish it. The accusing demon is represented as having just finished a survey of the earth, in the discharge of his ungracious duty; and hence the question is put relative to the character of Job, whose life and external circumstances he could not fail to scan with envious attention. Other angels were employed on a more pleasant service, as guardians to the good and supporters to the weak; but it admits not of doubt, at the same time, that, agreeably to the belief which prevailed in the time of the Arabian philosopher, both orders of spirits appeared occasionally before God to make their report, and to implore from the great Judge the exercise of wrath or of mercy, according to the deserts of those whose conduct they had witnessed. It is manifest, therefore, that no writer who held the tenet of the Two Principles in the sense afterwards recognised by the Jews, would have introduced the devil into the presence

* 1 Kings xxii. 19—22.

of the eternal sovereign of heaven and earth. The designs and attributes ascribed to Satan by the Hebrew tribes who returned to their own land are quite irreconcilable with the supposition that he should have been allowed a place among the sons of God, or be intrusted with a commission from the very mouth of the Omnipotent. For these reasons alone, and without any reliance upon external evidence, it may be concluded that this dramatic poem was written long before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

The common chronology introduced into the English Bible fixes the sufferings of Job twenty-nine years before the exode of the Israelites from Egypt; and that the book which bears his name was composed prior to that event is rendered probable by the silence of the author respecting the passage of the Red sea, the destruction of Pharaoh, and all the other miracles which accompanied the expedition of Moses into the desert. On similar grounds the absence of all allusion to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah and the adjoining cities of the plain, has been considered as a proof that the patriarch of Uz must have lived before the migration of Abraham into Canaan. It has been remarked, too, that the manners and customs described by the inspired writer correspond to all the notions entertained by antiquaries relative to the early period now supposed. Job, for example, acted as high-priest in his own family according to primitive usage; his practice in this respect agreeing with that of Melchizedek king of Salem, and of Jethro, whose possessions lay in Midian. It is further noticed, that the only species of false worship mentioned in this divine poem is sabaism, the most ancient kind of idolatry recorded in the annals of the human race, and denounced by the indignant sage as deserving punishment at the hands of men.*

* Chap. xxxi. 26—28. Hales, vol. ii. p. 53.

The length of Job's life moreover places him in the patriarchal times. He survived his afflictions 140 years, and was probably more than 100 years old when they began ; for not only had he around him seven sons with their families, but he also speaks of his youth as being already past, and of events which darkened the recollection of his early days. A farther evidence of the remote antiquity of this book is the language in which the dialogue is carried on by the several speakers, who, though they were all Idumeans, or at least Arabians of the adjacent country, are found conversing in Hebrew. Such a community of speech could not have been witnessed except in that very remote age when the posterity of Abraham by Ishmael, Jacob, and Esau, continued to use the same language, or one so little diversified by dialects as to be understood by the several inhabitants of Arabia and Canaan.

But it has been already stated, that the era of Job ought probably to be withdrawn to the generation contemporary with Terah the father of Abraham, after whose decease the limits of human life seldom exceeded 200 years. That he was not born sooner may be inferred from a remark made by Bildad respecting the wisdom of their ancestors. “ Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers ; for we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.” “ The fathers of the former age,” it is observed, “ were the companions of Peleg and Joktan, in the fifth generation after the Deluge ; and they might easily have learned wisdom from the fountain-head by conversing with Shem or perhaps with Noah himself ; whereas in the seventh generation, the standard of life compared with the longevity of the antediluvian patriarch might well be pronounced a shadow.”*

* Job viii. 8, 9. Analysis of Chronology, vol. ii. p. 54.

In opposition to the views now given, it has been argued that Job is the same person who is called Jobab in the First Book of Chronicles, where his lineage is traced through five descents to Abraham. This chronology is farther confirmed by an inscription at the close of the book, both in the Septuagint and Arabic versions, and the inference founded upon it has been received by many of the Greek and Latin fathers. According to this hypothesis, the afflicted man of the East must have flourished shortly after the time of Moses, and certainly after the promulgation of the law at Mount Sinai, as might be proved from the frequent allusions to its precepts as well as the historical facts related in various parts of the Pentateuch.*

But Dr Hales has adduced a new and more particular proof, drawn from astronomy, which fixes the time of the patriarch's sorrows to 184 years before the birth of Abraham ; for, by a retrograde calculation, the principal stars referred to

* The supposed references to the Books of Moses are xxvi. 12:—"He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud (waves) ;" xxxi. 11, where he mentions adultery as "an iniquity to be punished by the judges." In the same chapter, verse 26, he alludes to idolatry, and appeals to his Maker that he had not lifted up his eyes to the sun, nor to the moon, nor paid them any kind of adoration ; and in this passage he is imagined to have had in his eye the prohibitions contained in Deuteronomy iv. and xvii. The sacrifice, too, which he offered for his children, lest they had sinned ignorantly, is pronounced an act of obedience to the injunction in Deuteronomy xxii. 22. See *Clark's Chronological Succession of Sacred Literature*, vol. i. p. 7.

Among the more eminent writers who have conceived that the Book of Job does contain allusions to historical facts posterior to the commencement of the Egyptian bondage, and hence that the date of the poem must be placed below the Mosaic age, are Leclerc, Samuel Wesley, Warburton, and Stock. But to show how little value is attached to their opinions, it will be enough to quote their judgments respecting the following text : "In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away ; and the mighty shall be taken away without hand," xxxiv. 20. Dr Stock sees in this a reference to "the destruction of the first-born of the Egyptians ;" while Bishop Warburton with equal confidence discovers a direct allusion to the sudden extinction of the Assyrian army in the reign of Hezekiah.—*Good's Introductory Dissertation*, p. xlvi.

in his book by the names Chimal and Chesil, or Taurus and Scorpio, are found to have been in his days the cardinal constellations of spring and autumn, of which the chief stars are Aldebaran, the bull's eye, and Antares, the scorpion's heart. Knowing therefore the longitude of these stars at present, the interval of time from thence to the assumed period at which the man of Uz became the victim of Satan's malice will give the difference of their longitudes, and ascertain their positions at that epoch with respect to the points where the equator and ecliptic intersect each other at the vernal and autumnal equinox.

In the year 1800 Aldebaran was in 2 signs of degrees east longitude. But since the date of Job's trial, B. C. 2338 + 1800 = 4138, the precession of the equinoxes, at the rate of one degree in $71\frac{1}{2}$ years, amounted to one sign 27 degrees 53 minutes; and this being subtracted from the former quantity, left Aldebaran in only 9 degrees 7 minutes longitude, or distance from the vernal intersection; which falling within the limits of Taurus, rendered it the cardinal constellation of spring.

In the year 1800 Antares was in 8 signs 6 degrees 58 minutes east longitude; or 2 signs 6 degrees 58 minutes east of the autumnal intersection; from which subtracting, as before, the amount of the precession, Antares was left only 9 degrees 5 minutes east. Since, therefore, the autumnal equinox was found within Scorpio, this was at that time the cardinal constellation of autumn.

Hence, as these calculations accurately correspond to the positions of the equinoxes at the supposed period of Job's distress, but disagree with the lower date of the age of Moses and still more with that of Ezra, which furnish different cardinal constellations, "we may," concludes Dr Hales, "rest in the assumed date of the trial as correct. Such a combination and coincidence of various rays of evidence, derived

from widely different sources, history sacred and profane, chronology and astronomy, and all converging to the same common focus, tend strongly to establish the time of *Job's* trial as rightly assigned in the year B. C. 2237, or 818 years after the Deluge, 184 years before the birth of Abraham, 474 years before the settlement of Jacob's family in Egypt, and 689 before their exode or departure from thence."*

Amidst such variety of opinion as to the period when the Book of *Job* was written, the reader will not be surprised to learn that commentators are as much divided with regard to the author. Indeed it has been doubted whether the individual whose name is affixed to it, and whose fortunes it professes to narrate, be a real personage, or only the creation of a poetical fancy which meant to instruct through the medium of parable. This notion was first avowed by the celebrated Maimonides, and has been since adopted by Leclerc, Michaelis, Semler, Stock, and others of inferior note. The reality of *Job's* existence, on the contrary, has been maintained with great ability by Leusden, Calmet, Heidegger, Carpovius, Van Till, Spanheim, Moldenhauer, Schultens, Ilgen, Magee, Gray, Peters, Good, Taylor, Priestly, and Horne; and in short by almost every modern commentator and critic.†

But admitting that such a man really existed, it remains to be determined whether he wrote his own history, or left it to the care of some other inspired penman. Those who deny that the work is an autobiography ascribe the composition to Elihu, Moses, Ezra, or Solomon. That the son of David was the author, is a conjecture hazarded by the learned Grotius, who appears however to have had no other ground

* Hales, vol. ii. p. 53.

† An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. By Thomas Hartwell Horne, vol. iv. p. 67.

for it than the extensive knowledge which this extraordinary prince possessed on all scientific subjects, and some resemblances in the style to that of the Proverbs, which, as every scholar knows, is marked by the occasional occurrence of Arabic idioms. But independently of the general arguments for its greater antiquity, it may be observed with respect to Solomon, that none of his productions display the transcendent genius and highly figurative language which characterize the Book of Job. Again, as to the Arabianisms which may be detected in his undisputed writings, they are scattered with a very sparing hand, and were probably meant for nothing more than classical ornaments, like the occasional Grecian turns of speech employed for a similar purpose by Virgil and Cicero.*

That Ezra was the author of the work in question was a very early opinion, derived in like manner from the foreign character which the style ever and anon is seen to assume; an opinion, however, which was for many years contemned or forgotten till revived by Leclerc and warmly supported by Warburton. The latter, it has been already suggested, favoured the notion that the whole poem was a dramatical allegory, the character of Job being a mere fiction, or loosely grounded on history; and that it was written during the captivity of his people at Babylon by Ezra, who, under the guise of a good man persecuted equally by his friends and enemies, endeavoured to console the Hebrews on whom was laid the heavy load of a cruel bondage, and the painful feeling that they were abandoned by Jehovah the God of their fathers.†

From an erroneous conception of the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of the thirty-second chapter, Lightfoot was of opinion that Elihu arranged the dialogue as it is now pre-

* Good's Dissertation, p. 51.

† Introductory Dissertation as above.

sented to the reader. To refute this notion, nothing more is required besides an accurate rendering of the passage, which, it is obvious, does not imply any claim to authorship. Spanheim, on the other hand, supposes Job himself to have been the principal compiler of the work, and to have bestowed upon it after he was restored to prosperity the regular poetical form under which it now appears, relying for materials chiefly on his own recollection and the aid of his friends, whose sentiments are embodied in the narrative. He conjectures also that it was originally written in Arabic, and translated into Hebrew about the age of Solomon, by some learned Jew acquainted with both languages and moved by the Spirit of God to such an undertaking. Bishop Lowth concurs generally in this opinion; concluding that the patriarch in person, or some contemporary to whom his sufferings and character were known, composed this dramatic history of his life. Schultens and Hackman, on the contrary, maintain without hesitation that the book, as we now possess it, is expressed in the very words which were spoken by Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. The mixt dialect used by these miserable comforters is described by the former commentator as Hebrew-Arabic, which, he says, was the vernacular tongue of Idumea, in consequence of the inhabitants being a joint progeny descended from different branches of the Shemitic stock. He conceives besides that the lofty genius and fine imagination of this accomplished people were sufficient to have prompted them to an extemporaneous delivery of the entire argument, in the identical words as well as the harmonious order in which it has descended to us.*

* Lightfoot's Works, vol. i. p. 23. "The Book of Job seemeth to have been penned by Elihu, one of the speakers in it, as may appear by these two things: First, because in chapter second, when Job's friends that came to lament with him and to comfort him are reckoned and mentioned by name, Elihu is not named in the number; arguing, as it may well be conceived, these two things, 1st, That he came not to Job from a place far distant, as

Without entering into detail concerning any of the hypotheses now stated, it may be remarked that all of them suppose there has been introduced into the sacred canon of the Jewish scriptures a story relative to a man not included in the Abrahamic covenant, and composed by an author not less an alien to the commonwealth of Israel. Such a supposition, it has been remarked, is not countenanced by any other part of the Old Testament, while it is decidedly opposed to the national jealousy of the Hebrews in all cases, and more especially with regard to their sacred books. It only remains, then, to examine into the claims which have been made for Moses, first as the writer, and next as the translator of this divine poem.

To the inspired lawgiver of the Jews, it has been observed, more generally than to any one else, has been ascribed the merit of preserving, for the instruction of posterity, the affecting incidents which called into exercise the characteristic patience of Job. The writer, it is manifest, as a master of style, was equally conversant with the simple and the sublime ; was minutely acquainted with the astronomy, natural history, and general science of the age ; must have been a Hebrew by birth and an Arabian by residence, and therefore familiar with both tongues ; and, finally, that he must have composed his work before the departure of Israel from the land of Egypt. In this description, it is imagined, may be seen a complete portraiture of the history and acquirements of Moses ; whence a conclusion is drawn that there can be no longer any difficulty in determining as to the authorship in

the other three did, but neighboured upon him ; and, 2d, That he himself was the historian and penman that made the relation, and therefore he named not himself when he named others. Second, because in chapter xxxii. he speaketh of himself as the historian, verses 15, 16, 17 : ‘ They were amazed ; they answered no more ; they left off speaking. When I had waited (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more), I said, I will answer also my part ; I also will shew mine opinion.’ ”

question. Instructed in all the learning which the court of Pharaoh could command, it appears little doubtful that he devoted some part of the forty years spent in the establishment of Jethro to commemorate the faith and sufferings of the holy man of Uz.*

These arguments are submitted to the judgment of the reader, who, amidst the great uncertainty which prevails both as to date and author, will not fail to perceive the inconvenience of deciding with too much haste. There is, no doubt, a considerable weight of reason as well as of authority in favour of the opinion that Moses was the instrument employed by the Spirit of Jehovah for supplying to his people an example so full of godly warning and encouragement: but, on the supposition that Job was inspired, no small difficulty will be found to attend the conclusion just stated, which ascribes the work impressed with his name to a writer of a different age and nation. The main advantage to be reaped by mankind from a revelation made to him would, it is argued, have been lost, if he had not, either with his own hand, or by immediate dictation to an amanuensis, committed the subject to a permanent record. It is impossible that any other human being could have equally

* Introductory Dissertation, p. liv. Michaelis, in his notes to Bishop Lowth's Lectures, writes as follows: "I am much inclined to the opinion which attributes this book to Moses. If Moses were really the author of the poem, he composed it about the age of forty; but the rest of his poems were written between the eighty-fifth and one hundred and twentieth year of his age."

It is proper to mention that Dr Shuckford does not concur in the belief that Moses was the author of the Book of Job; but "that Job himself, who could best tell all the circumstances of his condition, and of what passed in the conferences he had with his friends, did some time before he died leave a written account of it; but the Book of Job we now have is not the very account which was written by Job, but that some inspired writer who lived later than his days composed it from the memoirs left by him. The greatest part of the present Book of Job is written in verse; and I suppose no one will imagine that poetry was attempted so early as the days of Job."—*Sacred and Profane History Connected*, vol. ii. p. 402.

conveyed the communications miraculously insinuated into his mind, unless that other person was inspired for the purpose; that is, unless a second miracle was wrought in order to effect an object which could have been just as well accomplished by means of the first miracle alone—an hypothesis which the whole conduct of Providence, as far as it is known to us, renders quite inadmissible.*

Bishop Patrick, in order to reconcile these discordant views, adopted an old tradition, importing that the language of the Idumean sage was different from Hebrew, into which tongue his book was subsequently translated by Moses. The late Archbishop Magee entertained a similar notion, remarking that “the poem being originally written either by Job or some contemporary of his, and existing in the time of Moses, might fall into his hands whilst residing in the land of Midian, or afterwards when in the neighbourhood of Idumea; and might naturally be made use of by him to represent to the Hebrews, either whilst repining under their Egyptian bondage or murmuring at their long wanderings in the wilderness, the great duty of submission to the will of God. The encouragement the book holds out that every good man suffering patiently will be finally rewarded, rendered it a work peculiarly calculated to minister mingled comfort and rebuke to the distressed and discontented Israelites, and which therefore might have been well employed by Moses for this purpose. We may also suppose that Moses in transcribing might have made some small and unimportant alterations, which will sufficiently account for occasional and partial resemblances of expression between it and the Pentateuch, if any such there be. This hypothesis

* An Examination of the Ancient Orthography of the Jews, &c. By Charles William Wall, D.D., Professor of Hebrew, Trinity College, Dublin, &c. p. 365.

both furnishes a reasonable compromise between the opinions of the great critics, who are divided upon the point of Moses being the author, and supplies an answer to a question of no small difficulty which hangs upon almost every other solution ; namely, when and wherefore a book treating manifestly of the concerns of a stranger, and in no way connected with their affairs, was received by the Jews into their sacred canon ; for Moses having thus applied the book to their use, and sanctioned it by his authority, it would naturally have been enrolled among their Sacred Writings ; and from the antiquity of that enrolment no record would consequently appear of its introduction.*

This hypothesis is also encumbered with the objection already urged, that Moses could not consider himself at liberty to make any alterations in an inspired work ; and therefore, whether he translated or merely copied it, he must have left entire to the Arabian prophet all the attributes of authorship. To remove or lessen the difficulties with which this question has been hitherto surrounded, viewed simply as an incident in the history of literature, it has been suggested in a recent publication that the Book of Job may have been originally written in hieroglyphs, and that the Hebrew legislator merely rendered the language of symbols into the vernacular tongue of the chosen people. Assuming this ground, the resemblances which the style is supposed to bear to certain parts of the Pentateuch may be easily explained, it being evident that in the alphabetic-reading of a hieroglyphical record the translator's own form of expres-

* Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrine of Atonement and Sacrifice, &c. By William Magee, D. D., vol. ii. p. 127. Edition 1812. The dissertation on the Book of Job extends from p. 91 to p. 202, and contains the substance of all the arguments which have been urged on the different questions of *era*, *author*, *language*, and *object*.

There is annexed an able criticism on Bishop Stock's translation of Job, deficient in nothing but the grace of gentleness.

sion must occasionally appear, not less than in the more common process of giving a version of a foreign dialect. Nay, there is an attempt made to corroborate this reasoning by a reference to the peculiar character of the composition—the elliptic form of the sentences, and the intellectual nature of the poetry. The high strain of metaphor and the obscurity of the ideas involved in the figures of speech are, it is maintained, exactly what might be expected in the supposed circumstances of the case. In this poem we are entitled to look for traces of an ideagraphic mode of expression, not only because the writer was accustomed to that mode, but because he had before him a hieroglyphic original to transcribe; and “it would be very unlikely indeed that some of the peculiarities of such original should not be transfused into the alphabetical exhibition of its meaning.”*

Dr Wall is farther satisfied that the considerations which he has suggested will enable those of the learned who pursue this subject to account for some of the peculiar perplexities with which the Book of Job is obscured. Suppose, then, that while the Divine Spirit protected Moses from any material error in the transcription or translation of the hieroglyphical poem, it yet left him to his natural resources in the execution of the work. The inevitable consequences, we are told, would be, that the transcriber himself would find a difficulty in fixing the meaning of some of the passages of the record. For though, from the nature of this kind of writing, he would be at liberty to modify and combine according to his discretion the ideas immediately suggested by the characters, yet the fidelity of transcription would not allow him totally to alter or omit one of those ideas; and however careful he might be in associating the leading thoughts, he might find

* Dr Wall's Examination of the Ancient Orthography of the Jews, p. 367.

it very hard to give his words a meaning that would intelligibly connect them with the surrounding passages. Certainly, he continues, there are detached sentences in Job, which, without appearing to include any ellipsis, and without containing any words of unusual occurrence, are yet peculiarly obscure. Whether such peculiarities can be in part accounted for by the cause here suggested, is submitted to the learned for their investigation and judgment; but it is acknowledged to be a subject on which no biblical scholar ought at present to hazard a decided or confident opinion.*

It is held by this learned writer that there is no real inconsistency in the two conclusions which have hitherto divided commentators respecting the Book of Job; some of whom believe that it was written by the upright Sheikh's own hand, while others adhere to the opinion that it was composed by Moses. On the contrary, he insists that, so far from being incompatible, the one inference actually leads to the establishment of the other. "From the book having been written by Job himself, it has already been directly deduced that it was originally composed in hieroglyphs; and from this fact again (provided the principle be admitted that miracles are not wrought for the accomplishment of objects which can be effected through natural means), it directly follows that Moses must have been the person who transcribed it into alphabetical writing. For not only was he peculiarly fitted for the office, by being an expert hieroglyphic reader and familiar with the subject of the record, but besides, no other person can possibly be assigned who was at all qualified for the undertaking. The Jews of his own time had neither leisure for learning hieroglyphs (they were continually engaged in the servile occupation of making bricks), nor had they in Egypt the opportunity of

becoming acquainted with Job's history. The Jews of subsequent ages had no inducement to learn hieroglyphs (they had been taught a far superior mode of writing), and even if they had learned such as were employed by surrounding nations in their own time, this would not have enabled them to read an ideagraphic record of old standing."

It ought to be mentioned that these ingenious speculations rest on a basis which the Hebrew professor had previously laboured to establish respecting the origin of alphabetical writing. Adopting the opinion of those who believe that the use of letters, properly so called, was a divine gift, and not in any respect the fruit of human invention, he identifies the era when this celestial benefaction was conferred on our race with the giving of the ten commandments on Mount Sinai. As Moses, according to this hypothesis, was the first who used phonetic signs as the medium of expressing thought and sentiment, it follows that if the Book of Job was composed before the promulgation of the Law, it must have appeared in the language of hieroglyphics.

But does the history of ancient learning supply any proof that such a work could be committed to sculptured symbols, or that in such a form it would have answered the purpose for which it was written, the furtherance of sound doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness? Ideagraphic pictures could only be interpreted by those who were expert in the learning of the Egyptians; and even to them the meaning would be more frequently a subject of conjecture than of distinct revelation. Besides, it is extremely improbable that a composition of such length, containing arguments so refined, and poetical figures so intricate, could be engraved on a slab of stone, or a sheet of metal. But supposing all mechanical difficulties overcome, is there any ground to believe that the ablest hieroglyphist could accommodate his signs to all the varieties of perception, imagi-

nation, and reasoning, which animate the pages wherein Job's sufferings are described, his character analyzed, his principles reviewed, and the moral laws of the universe so eloquently vindicated. The accomplishment of such an object would require the assistance of a double miracle; for it is beyond all rational doubt that no one unaided by supernatural power could either carve on the rock the sublime ideas of this Arabic poem, or explain its import in written speech. Dr Wall himself admits that even an inspired translator, however careful he might be in connecting the leading thoughts, "might yet find it very hard to give his words a meaning that would intelligibly connect them with the surrounding passages." If then the history of Job was meant for a lesson of patient endurance and trust in Divine Providence, is it probable that it would be delineated in a form accessible only to a few minds of the highest order, and incapable of being read even by them without the aid of a miracle—the immediate interposition of the Holy Ghost? We may therefore conclude that the learned are not yet put in possession of a key to open all the stores of oriental knowledge, and thereby to supply the means of determining to what extent we are indebted to the inspired son of Amram for one of the noblest productions in the ancient canon of Scripture.*

Dr Wall in the course of this discussion adverts to an objection which, however speciously answered, is not altogether removed. Admitting that, among the peculiarities in the Book of Job, the reader might expect to find a "paucity and unconnectedness of terms" corresponding to the nature of the signs employed in the hieroglyphic original, and that the absence of this characteristic feature affords a just ground for suspicion that his hypothesis is not well founded,

* Wall's Inquiry into the Origin of Alphabetical Writing, with which is incorporated an Essay on the Egyptian Hieroglyphics, p. 375.

he proceeds to the consideration of what he esteems parallel cases. He refers, for instance, to the sentence contained in the *Stromata* of Clemens Alexandrinus, where the hieroglyphs are the images of a boy, an old man, a hawk, a fish, and a crocodile. Nothing, it is alleged, could be more “abstract in form nor disunited in ingredients,” and yet the reading of this sentence, as given in the work just quoted, is perfectly coherent and well connected; “O you who are born and you who die, God hates impudence.” The next example is Daniel’s reading of the miraculous writing on the wall of Belshazzar’s palace:—“God hath *numbered* thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art *weighed* in the balances, and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is *divided*, and given to the Medes and *Persians*.” Here, it is said, we do not discover any want of subsidiary elements necessary for modifying or connecting the expression of the leading thoughts. All is clear, intelligible, and well defined; and had this awful denunciation been transmitted to us alone, we should never have suspected that the original, of which it was the reading, consisted only of three signs or groups of signs, merely expressing in their immediate signification, the first of them *number*; the second, *weight*; and the third ambiguously either *division* or *Persians*.*

With respect to the latter instance, as the exposition was pronounced under the guidance of an infallible Spirit, there can be no room for difference of opinion; but in regard to the former, there might have been hazarded by the Alexandrian presbyter a great variety of reading, besides the one actually recorded, in which every thing would have appeared “clear, intelligible, and well defined.” Little ingenuity is required in such cases to give a plausible meaning and connection to hieroglyphical signs. For example, instead of the render-

ing preserved by Clement, the following might be substituted, as not less agreeable to the import of the symbols nor less in harmony with the moral intention of the precept. *In youth and in age be vigilant, for at all times there is danger both by land and by water.* The interpretation of Daniel cannot be called in question ; but it is nevertheless perfectly obvious that, had an uninspired hieroglyphist undertaken the task of enlightening the mind or addressing the conscience of the perplexed monarch, he might very justly have read to him, “ God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it ; thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting ; thy kingdom is divided against itself, and will soon become a prey to dissension.” It is therefore too obvious to require the aid of argument that, where there is so much room for variety in expounding the signs used by pictural writers, even in single sentences, no reliance can be placed on the translation of a long work, such as the Book of Job, unless the second author enjoys the full amount of inspiration conferred upon the first.

But the object in view, as indicated by the title at the head of this chapter, did not perhaps require that I should enter into so minute an analysis of this sublime poem, transmitted to us from the remotest period of Arabian history. In connecting the annals of the surrounding nations with those of the Hebrews as contained in the Sacred Scriptures, it might seem of greater importance to ascertain wherein their religious opinions agreed, than merely to explain the mechanical processes by which their several doctrines have been perpetuated. Assuming, then, that the Book of Job was composed prior to the revelation of the Mosaical institutes, it will appear well entitled to the distinction it has long held among theological writers, as the best and fullest depository of patriarchal belief, and supplied too by the very person who was most competent to do justice to it. Viewed

in this light, we shall be able at once to point out its ultimate intention, and to give a reason for its being introduced into the Jewish canon, as a treatise impressed with divine authority.

The following tenets have been collected from its pages, and seem fully established by a careful examination of the text ; the creation of the world by one supreme and eternal intelligence ; its government by his constant superintendence ; the designs of his providence carried into effect by the ministration of a heavenly hierarchy, composed of various ranks and orders, and possessing different names, dignities, and offices ; an apostasy or defection of some of those powers of which Satan seems to have been the chief ; the existence of good and evil angels, equally formed by the Creator, and hence all denominated “ Sons of God,” both of which, as they are employed by him in the administration of his vast kingdom, so are they amenable to him at certain periods to give an account of their respective missions ; a resurrection from the dead, and a day of judgment and future retribution to all mankind ; the propitiation of the Almighty by sacrifices in the case of human transgression ; and, finally, the mediation or intercession of a righteous person in behalf of the bad.*

The doctrine of ministering spirits is found connected with all the theological systems of the East, at the most distant eras to which our inquiries can extend ; and the same belief, modified or corrupted, has descended to the Persians and Arabs of the present day. According to the leading principles of the Koran, the doom of Satan and of those who fell with him will not take place till after that of mankind at the general resurrection ; down to which period, agreeably to the tenor of the Book of Job, they will be permitted by the Omnipotent to roam throughout the world, proving the

* Good, Introductory Dissertation, p. 64.

human race by manifold temptations and various afflictions. In the mean time, two guardian angels are assigned to every man for his protection, who impartially note his actions and treasure up the memory of his conflicts with sin, to await the revelation of the righteous judgment of God at the latter day when the Redeemer shall appear upon the earth.

On the important questions which respect the resurrection from the dead and a future state of reward and punishment, the sentiments expressed by Job and his friends appear to be sometimes at variance. Hence some learned commentators, from the age of St Chrysostom to the present hour, have denied that these doctrines can be legitimately established on the basis of their arguments, or that the belief could have been general among their contemporaries. It must be admitted that the only individual who distinctly alludes to the subject is the patriarch himself; and it certainly seems not a little extraordinary that none of his visitors, when reminding him of the advantages of repentance, should ever direct his attention to the favour of Jehovah in the world to come. But, nevertheless, it seems clear that the doctrine of future existence, and even of an exact retribution, was fully known at the period when this book was composed; the expectation being grounded on the resurrection of the body, as the main fact connected with the comfortable hope of everlasting life. The circumstance now mentioned is deserving of more particular notice, because it forms a distinction between the faith of patriarchal times and the deductions to which the philosophers of Greece and Rome arrived by a process of reasoning. The descendants of Abraham, whether in Arabia or Palestine, rested their belief of an hereafter chiefly on the resuscitation of the mortal part of man from the grave; whereas the disciples of the western schools appealed to the imperishable nature of the soul itself, as a substance which, as it could not perish,

must continue to live, either absorbed in the great spirit of the universe, or sent back to animate some other organized frame in this world.*

If the natives of Arabia held opinions on the nature of God, of the human soul, and of the future condition of mankind, similar to those which were entertained by the Hebrews, they likewise manifested a proneness to the same corruptions in religious usage, the worship of the host of heaven on the high hill and under the green tree. As the sun is the fountain of light, he was considered by the sabaists as the meekest symbol of the Deity who is the fountain of intelligence. The inferior spirits, of which they imagined certain classes, were supposed to be represented by the stars according to their several magnitudes ; and hence an undefinable harmony was understood to exist between the spiritual world and the material, the latter being regarded as a type or sensible development of the former. The undeviating regularity observed in the march of the celestial bodies, their periodical revolutions in their orbits, and the concert which seems to exist among them, were believed to indicate the relations established by infinite wisdom among the spiritual hierarchy of heaven.

It has been well observed that it is difficult, if not impossible, to speak clearly of the Divine Being. He who tries to express the attributes of God by the help of abstractions, confines himself to negatives, and easily loses sight of his ideas in wandering through a wilderness of words. He who heaps superlatives on superlatives, and describes the source of all existence as the wisest, the best, and the greatest, only exaggerates qualities which are found in man. That there

* Sir William Jones (vol. vi.) affords ample proof that this notion was borrowed from the Gymnosophists of India, and imported into Europe by Pythagoras or Orpheus, with other tenets derived from the same source.

exists one God, and that he is perfectly beneficent, reason and religion combine to impress upon our minds ; but of his essence, or the mode in which he exercises his attributes, the human intellect cannot form any conception. We can affix no clear ideas to the words omnipotence, omniscience, infinity, or eternity. Under these circumstances, we ought not to blame too severely the weakness of the sabaists when they attempt to represent immaterial natures by material emblems. Had the rest of his doctrine been sound, we could scarcely have objected to Zoroaster because he clothed Oromasdes with light and Arimanius with darkness.*

But whether excusable or not in any degree, there can be no doubt that sabaism, or the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, was the most widely extended religious system ever invented by the unassisted reason of man. Why the use of images should have been so easily admitted by some of the nations which followed this superstition, while it was so sternly rejected by others, is a question of no easy solution. It is perfectly manifest, however, that a complete schism was effected on this very ground between the Persians and the Chaldeans ; the one people confining their adoration to the bright luminary which holds its place in the sky, while the other praised the conveniency of having a symbolical representative. An obelisk was supposed to have some resemblance to the solar rays ; and the cones, globes, and pyramids which every where invited the eye of the ido-

* Origines, vol. iii. p. 124. Sir William Drummond remarks, that " we find examples even among ourselves where metaphorical language hardly keeps within the bounds of sane theology. There is more poetry than philosophy in the following beautiful lines of Milton :—

Hail, holy light, offspring of Heaven first born,
Or of th' Eternal co-eternal beam !
May I express thee unblamed, *since God is light*,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity ; dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate !"

later, were probably meant to convey to the fancy some notions of the form, the path, and the energy of the splendid objects to which they lifted up their hearts.

When men began to cultivate the arts, they took pleasure in giving more appropriate forms to the images of their deities. The Greeks in particular succeeded in adorning their statues with that ideal beauty which constitutes the perfection of the human figure, and has been so much admired in all subsequent ages. The Egyptians, on the contrary, and the inhabitants of Central Asia, appear to have considered their gods as mere symbols ; and trusting to the aid of hieroglyphs, they endeavoured to express the attributes of each divinity by conventional signs, sculptured with little regard to elegance, and ending in the formation of some monstrous idol. The number of hands, heads, and eyes, denoted the power, the wisdom, and the vigilance which belonged to the several members of their pantheon. In this manner may we account for the fantastic shapes given to the images of the Indian gods ; the object of all the grotesque appendages which deform them being nothing more than to represent their individual characters by expressive types.

In the early period of their history, the Arabians, like other barbarous nations, appear to have been satisfied with rude or sculptured stones as the representatives of their immortal protectors. The pillars erected by the ancient patriarchs, Abraham and his heirs, were no doubt intended to serve a similar purpose. Sanchoniatho writes concerning animated stones, or masses of rock hewn into the form of living creatures, which were said to have been fabricated by Ouranos, himself a divine person. The Greeks, according to Pausanias, directed their veneration to stones of a white colour, having a reference, it is probable, to the luminous aspect of the greater and smaller planets ; while other tribes,

especially the Arabs, adored one of a dark hue, thereby doing honour, it may be presumed, to the same bodies when in a state of eclipse.*

Pocock supplies a list of divinities, revered or acknowledged by the Arabians, in which we recognise the names of the principal stars, and of those other wandering lights that so forcibly arrest the attention of the shepherd while keeping watch over his flock in the desert. The host of heaven, as already mentioned, were worshipped not altogether on account of their use and their glorious effulgence, as part of the physical creation, but rather because they were regarded as the mansions of powerful spirits who at once regulated their movements and influenced very deeply the fortunes of mankind. In this respect their ideas coincided with those of their kinsmen who worshipped on Tabor and Carmel, and whose early steps brushed away the dews of Hermon as they ascended to greet the rising sun. This pleasant adoration was the last that the Hebrews could be induced to relinquish. Their captivity in Babylon inspired them with an abhorrence of images, but they continued nevertheless to venerate the holy light, and to address Jehovah through the most magnificent of his works.

The moral wisdom too of the Arabs, like that of the countrymen of Solomon, assumed the form of apothegms, parables, and proverbs. The discourses of their philosophical poets are distinguished by the name of *Mekâma*, and bear no slight resemblance to the dialogues in Job, and to the wise sayings recorded by the inspired author of Ecclesiastes. The term now mentioned bears reference to an as-

* Ovid seems to have doubted whether the god Terminus, who disputed with Jupiter the possession of the Capitol, was a stone or the stump of a tree.

“ Termine, sive lapis, sive es defossus in agro

Stipes !”

But Virgil decides that Terminus was a stone.—“*Capitolî immobile saxum.*” See Pausan. Achaic. c. 22. ; and Attic. c. 44. Origines, vol. iii. p. 436.

sembly convened for literary conversation, where opinions were discussed and compositions read. The *Mekâma* comprehended every subject on which a poetical fancy or a sage understanding could exercise its powers ; though it is believed that the topics introduced were usually of an ethical description, such as inquiries into the nature of man, the purposes of his existence upon earth, and the laws of that moral government under which all the children of Adam are placed. It was the opinion of Professor Bauer that the work which originated in the conferences at Uz approximates very nearly to this species of discourse ; and a modern author reminds us that the scene was laid in Idumæa, that the interlocutors were Edomite-Arabs, and that the manners and customs, which have not varied in any material degree, are supported by those of their modern descendants. Since, then, the Book of Job is allowed on all hands to be a poem single and unparalleled in the sacred volume, may we not consider it as the prototype of the *Mekâma* of the Arabians ? This conjecture, it is added, possesses at least one advantage, in that it furnishes a compromise between the opinions of the great critics who are divided in sentiment upon the class of poetry to which this book is to be referred, and perhaps reconciles difficulties which could not otherwise be solved respecting its real nature.*

Upon a careful review it will be found that the same confidence in dreams and divination which so often misled the more superstitious among the Jews prevailed also among the ancient Arabs ; and thus it will appear that the means not unfrequently employed by Divine Providence for communicating the most solemn truths of religion were, on many occasions, perverted by the ignorant or the designing into a source of deception, error, and impiety. The use of

* Horne's Introduction, vol. iv. p. 82.

arrows for the purpose of discovering the will of Heaven was common to nearly all the nations of the East. In the prophecies of Ezekiel we read that "the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination : he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver. At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint battering-rams against the gates, to cast a mount, and to build a fort."*

The event to which these remarks apply was the expedition of Nebuchadnezzar, who, after putting himself at the head of his army to march against Zedekiah king of Judah who had revolted, and against the sovereign of the Ammonites who had also thrown off his yoke, hesitated which of the two he should attack first. Having arrived at a point where the roads leading into either kingdom separate, he threw a number of arrows into a quiver, with the names of the two capitals, Rabbath and Jerusalem, attached to them ; and then proceeded to draw them out, in the confidence of having his doubts removed by the title inscribed on the one which first came to his hand. In our version it is said, "he made his arrows bright ;" but the meaning evidently is, that he shook them together before he had recourse to the augury. The Arabs in old time practised the same art, which in their tongue was called Acdah and Azlam. In this case the arrows amounted to three, having on them neither iron nor feather : on one was written "Command me, O God," on another, "Forbid me, O God," and the last bore no inscription. If the priest drew from the bag the first of these the inquirer prosecuted his intentions ; if the second appeared he desisted from the undertaking a whole year ; and

* Ezekiel xxi. 21, 22.

if the unlettered one came forth it was necessary to repeat the operation. The ancient Germans, we learn from Tacitus, had recourse to a similar expedient for finding the path to good fortune; and the Scythians, influenced by the same feelings of doubt and curiosity, appealed in like manner to the decrees of fate; but instead of arrows these simple tribes satisfied themselves with the branch of an apple-tree, or of a willow, which they divided into small pieces and threw on the ground. The diviner who gathered them up had the talent of perceiving, in their order or combination, the will of the god whom it was his duty to consult.*

A more minute detail on the customs and opinions of the ancient Arabians would prove inconsistent with the object of this chapter, which was meant to explain their history rather than their usages. We therefore recur to the investigation, already partially introduced, respecting the origin of alphabetical writing as connected with hieroglyphics and the intermediate state of phonetic signs.

* Calmet, Dictionnaire Historique, Critique, Chronologique, Géographique, et Littéral de la Bible, tome ii. Art. Fleche. Hieronymus in loc. writes as follows:—"Ritu gentis suæ (Nab chodonosor) oraculum consulit, ut mittat sagittas suas in pharetra: ammisceat eas inscriptas, sive signatas nominibus singulorum, ut ideat ejus sagitta exeat, et quam prius civitatem debeat oppugnare. Hinc aut in Græci βελομαντίαν sive βελδομαντίαν vocant."—*Grotius, Annot. ad Ezechielem.*

On the Sabæan superstition may be consulted Pocockii Specimen Hist. Arab. Young's Historical Disertations on Idolatrous Corruptions Religion. Gale's Court of the Gentiles. Landseer's Sabæan Researches. Hyde's Historia Relig. Vet. Persarum. Selden De Diis Syris. Abulfaragii Hist. Dynast. by Pocock. Eusebii Præparat. Evangel. lib. i. c. 9. Knight's Inquiry into the Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology. Long's Astronomy, Book ii. c. 2. Reasons of the Laws of Moses translated from the "More Nevochim" of Maimonides by Dr Townley, p. 38. Townsend's Essays in Classical Journal, Nos. 42, 43, 44. 45, 46.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE ORIGIN OF WRITING, AS FOUNDED ON ALPHABETICAL NOTATION AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE EAST.

ALTHOUGH in the second chapter some remarks have been made on the nature and use of phonetic hieroglyphs, it still appears necessary to extend our inquiries a little farther into the origin of alphabetical writing, more especially among the Hebrews and the nations by whom they were surrounded. It has been already observed, indeed, that no certainty can be attained as to the date at which pictorial signs passed into simple letters; but there is nevertheless some room for investigation relative to the nature of the process whereby this change was effected, and the means which contributed to its accomplishment.

The industry and good fortune of the moderns have supplied to us ample materials for constructing a consistent theory with regard to that ancient method of communication which trusted exclusively to symbols. The hieroglyphs of the Egyptians, the picture-writing of the Mexicans, and the imitative characters of the Chinese, as they proceed on a

common principle, throw a clear light on the necessities whence they sprang and on the purpose they were meant to serve. But between the delineation of an external object, however much abridged, and an alphabetical character restricted to a mere sound, there is a wide and somewhat obscure interval, over which the learning of the most ingenious authors has hitherto failed to conduct us with satisfaction.

It is the opinion of many that the first alphabet was of divine origin; and not a few hold the conclusion, noticed in a former chapter, that the Almighty conferred upon Moses the knowledge of letters when the ten commandments were committed to the tables of stone. Among the writers to whom allusion is now made will be found the distinguished names of St Cyril, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Isidore of Seville, Bryant, Costard, Windar, Gebelin, and others in more recent times. But the grounds on which their reasoning is established have been questioned by men possessed of equal learning and ability. These last maintain that writing is mentioned in Exodus immediately after the defeat of the Amalekites near Horeb, and before the arrival of the Israelites at Mount Sinai. The divine leader of the Hebrews is commanded to write in a book the denunciation of Jehovah against the people he had just overthrown, and to rehearse it in the ears of Joshua. Nor is any intimation given in the sacred pages which might induce the reader to believe that writing was then newly invented. On the contrary, there seems reason to conclude that Moses distinctly comprehended what was meant by "writing in a book," otherwise God would have instructed him in this wonderful art, as Noah was instructed in the less recondite means which were necessary for building the ark. We also find that the same inspired lawgiver wrote all the words and all the judgments of the Lord contained in the twenty-first

and two following chapters of Exodus, before the tables of stone were even so much as promised. The delivery of these tables is not mentioned till the eighteenth verse of the thirty-first chapter, after God had made an end of communing with his servant upon the mount, though the promulgation of the ten commandments is recorded in the twentieth chapter immediately after his third descent.*

We may add that Moses nowhere represents the alphabet as an invention peculiar to his time, much less that the use of it was first made known to him: on the contrary, he speaks of the art of writing as a thing well known and even familiar to the practice of his people. For example, in the twenty-eighth chapter of Exodus he says, “And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, *like the engravings of a signet*; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.” And again, “thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” It would be absurd to deny that this sentence must have been in words and letters. But it farther appears that writing was practised by the congregation of the Hebrews in general at this stage of their progress through the wilderness. Of this there is a proof in the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, where the sacred historian relates that “Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. And it shall

* Exod. xxxi. 18. “And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.” See Astle on the Origin and Progress of Writing, p. 12. This author distinguishes the different times of Moses’ ascending and descending the mount as follows:—

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| First Ascent, | Second Ascent, | Third Ascent, | Fourth Ascent, |
| Exod. xix. 3. | Exod. xix. 8. | Exod. xix. 20. | Exod. xxiv. 13. |
| First Descent, | Second Descent, | Third Descent, | Fourth Descent, |
| Exod. xix. 7. | Exod. xix. 14. | Exod. xix. 25. | Exod. xxxii 15. |

be, on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster. And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law.—And thou shalt offer peace-offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the Lord thy God. And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.”

It has been remarked by an able writer, that if “Moses had been the inventor of the alphabet, or received letters from God, which till then had been unknown to the Israelites, it would have been well worthy of his understanding, and very suitable to his character, to have explained to them the nature and use of this invaluable art which God had communicated to him : and may we not naturally suppose that he would have said, when he directed the workmen to grave names and sentences on stones and gold, ‘In these engravings you shall use the alphabetical characters which God hath communicated to me, or which I have now invented and taught you the use of?’ But the truth is, he refers them to a model in familiar use, *like the engravings of a signet* ; for the ancient people of the East engraved names and sentences on their seals in the same manner as is now practised by the great lama of Tartary, the princes in India, the emperor of Constantinople, and his subordinate rulers.*

It must be admitted, at the same time, that most nations have assigned to letters a divine origin ; and it is perfectly

* The Origin and Progress of Writing as well Hieroglyphic as Elementary, illustrated by Engravings taken from Marbles, Manuscripts, and Charters, Ancient and Modern : also some account of the Origin and Progress of Printing. By Thomas Astle, Esq.

It is remarkable that signets were used by the Hebrews before they went down into Egypt, as we learn from Genesis xxxviii. 18, where it is stated that Judah gave Thamar his signet ; and it is reasonable to suppose that this signet was similar to those used by the Israelites and the other neighbouring nations, p. 14.

reasonable to suppose that speech, so necessary to the existence of human society, was bestowed as a gift upon the first parents of our race. But the art of writing is not equally indispensable to man; and therefore, as the Bible has vouchsafed no revelation on this subject, we may be allowed to conclude that the descendants of Noah were left to those ordinary resources whence they derived the principles of science as applicable to other pursuits, such as the modulation of sounds in music, the combination of numbers in arithmetic, and the periodical returns of the heavenly bodies in astronomy. In all these pursuits the progress of invention is slow, and in most of them has failed to leave any traces sufficiently distinct to enable posterity to mark the precise course that was followed. The few records, however, which remain will serve to convince the diligent inquirer that the path of improvement in all cases has been very similar. The simple expedient of knots on strings, used by the South Americans, was succeeded by picture-writing, in the various forms of hieroglyphs, portraits, and emblems; which at a subsequent period were replaced by phonetic signs, the first rudiments of a regular alphabet.

The fixed character of the Chinese, so averse to innovation even when identified with the most manifest improvement, has been the means of preserving for the study of Europeans the several steps by which language advances, from its rudest endeavour to give ideas a visible sign, to the highest degree of perfection it has yet attained. They tell us that their emperor Fo-hi was the first who substituted a painted character for the knots previously used to express words and thoughts; but there is reason to believe that this attempt was not made till the reign of Hwang-ti, who flourished about 2700 years before the Christian era. The first characters in China, in Egypt, and in Mexico, were rude delineations of visible objects, which were gradually reduced to an im-

perfect outline ; and in process of time so little of the original figure was left that nothing short of a powerful association could recall the object to the mind when the skeleton of the symbol was presented to the eye. Such was the hieratic character of the Egyptians as distinguished from the hieroglyphic ; and such at this day are many of the Chinese radicals, as appears from a comparison of their ancient and modern forms.

The elementary characters in China, called *syang-hing*, or images, amount to little more than 200, and are found very unsuitable for the expression of abstract or complex ideas. They are nevertheless deserving of attention in another point of view, namely, in so far as they present a faithful picture of the state of the people by whom they were invented, and carry us back to that remote period when the nation had not yet emerged from barbarism. The insufficiency of these meagre elements must have been felt as soon as their wants and knowledge were enlarged by civilisation ; and in this progress, from the rude state of shepherds to that of agriculturists, they gave an indication of acuteness which could scarcely have been expected. They perceived that if every object were to be expressed by a different symbol, the number of these signs would be almost unlimited ; they therefore assumed one of those already in use to be employed as a generic term for all objects of the same kind, and added a few others as the specific distinction of each individual. By this ingenious device a vast multitude of compound signs were formed, the origin of which in many cases may still be clearly ascertained ; and from combinations of this small number of elements, not exceeding 214, all the 40,000 have arisen which are at present found in the best Chinese dictionaries.

As society advanced and the relations of life were multiplied, more complex ideas were formed, and thence arose

five other classes of symbols still used by the Chinese. Of these the first embraces abstract nouns and particular modifications of ideas ; often implying very ingenious metaphors. Thus, the sun and moon united signify light ; a man on a mountain, a hermit ; a bird and a mouth, a song ; a woman, hand, and broom, the mother of a family ; a door and ear, hearing ; and water united with an eye, tears. The next class of signs is applied to position, and denotes whether an object be relatively above or below, as also to number and succession. But it is more interesting to observe the expedients which are employed to express operations of the mind. One set of terms invented for this purpose are denominated *kya-tsyei* or borrowed, that is, metaphorical, and are sometimes brought from a quarter whence none but a native of China would have thought of taking them. Thus, *man* is expressed by a house ; and *woman* by a room. A heart is used for the symbol of *mind* or understanding ; a *hand* for an artificer ; two men face to face for *salutation*, back to back for *separation* ; and one man walking after another denotes the verb “ to follow.” In these the sense is sufficiently clear, but the import is less obvious though not less instructive when a heart surmounted by a slave is made to denote passion ; two pearls side by side, friendship ; and a woman, coupled with the emblem of speech and a net, is delineated to set forth seduction.

The class which stands last in order is the most modern, and unquestionably the most singular of all. It consists of compounds, in which one symbol only is ideographic or significant, whilst the other conveys a sound. The name of this class is *hing-shing*, implying that it is phonetic as well as descriptive, and the figures are used as follows :—To a generic term, such as tree, man, or quadruped, is added a familiar sign, the meaning of which, when *pronounced*, gives the specific variety of the object indicated by the former

term. For example, in juxtaposition to the symbol denoting a *tree* in general, is placed another symbol expressing the colour *white*. Now, as every Chinese knows that *pe* is the word for white, he is led to the inference that the tree set forth in the hieroglyphic must be the one usually called *pe*, which in the common language of the country is in fact known to mean a *cyprus*. In this manner the one symbol is made to represent an idea and the other a name or sound ; thereby combining the two orders of hieroglyphics, the ideographic and the phonetic, though on a principle somewhat different from that adopted by the Egyptians.

No one can have looked into a Chinese volume without perceiving that the elementary characters are very unlike the objects they are meant to represent. Hence it has been rather hastily inferred that this people never made use of hieroglyphics, or at least that their present mode of writing has no connection with such inscriptions. They have a tradition still firmly believed, that their prince F'o-shee was the inventor of the system upon which their written characters are formed, and which without any material alteration has continued in use to this day. By their peculiar construction they speak at once to the eye ; every one being the symbol of an idea. Nor is this advantage confined to their universal application ; they have another and most important property, that, namely, of affording a beautiful system of classification, under which all the objects of nature and art may be methodically arranged.

An author who studied their language deeply calls it a fortunate instinct that guided the Chinese in its composition, and which led them, instead of framing characters altogether new, to express things which met their eye for the first time by the ingenious combination of those elementary symbols they already possessed. Thus, for instance, among the *roots* we find horse, dog, and metal ; and the addition of some

other significant symbol, expressive of some peculiar property, serves as we have already mentioned, to designate the different species comprised under these principal genera. In this manner each natural object becomes provided with a binary denomination, inasmuch as the complex character is necessarily formed of two parts ; one for the class, order, or genus, the other for the species or variety. Thus they have horse, horse-ass, horse-mule ; dog, dog-wolf, dog-fox ; metal, metal-iron, metal-copper, metal-silver—the elementary or generic words horse, dog, metal, being those under which the compounds are arranged in the dictionary of science. Thousands of terms have been thus compounded, and thousands may be constructed in the same way ; for the process by which they are created, and which is strictly analogous to the principle of the Linnæan nomenclature, is one which cannot be exhausted by repetition.*

Where the characters used are abridged symbols or hieroglyphs, such as the Chinese is at present, and the demotic of the Egyptians was in the time of the Ptolemies, they can only be arranged in classes derived from some peculiarity in their form common to a great number. If the characters are compound, all which have one common element may be placed together ; and the grammarians, by adopting this plan, have contrived to arrange the forty thousand words already existing in their language in such a manner as to render it easy to consult their dictionaries when once the radical character is known. As to the precise number of these roots, much difference of opinion prevails ; but 214 are usually admitted in the tables of their lexicons, and one of them, either in its original or in an abbreviated form, is found to compose a part of every sign in the language. Hence it becomes the *key* to the character, in the composition of

* Quarterly Review, vol. lvi. p. 505. Remusat's Gram. Chin., and Davis' General Description of the Empire of China, vol. ii. p. 151.

which it appears as the main ingredient. The eye, we are assured, is soon accustomed to fix upon the particular root of the most complicated symbols, though in some of them there are not fewer than sixty or seventy distinct lines and points. The right line, the curved line, and a point, are the rudiments of all the signs; and these variously combined with one another have been extended from time to time, as occasion might require, to nearly eighty thousand different characters.*

The manner in which the Chinese dictionaries are arranged will help to afford a correct notion of this extraordinary language. All the 214 roots or keys are delineated distinctly on the head of the page, beginning with the most simple, or that which contains the smallest number of lines or points, and proceeding by degrees to the more complicated; and on the margin are marked the numeral characters, one, two, three, to the extent that may be required, signifying that the root or key at the top will be found in the same page combined with one, two, three, or more points and lines. Suppose, for example, a learner should meet with an unknown character in which he perceives that the simple sign expressing *water* is the key, and that it contains besides this root *six* additional points and lines, he immediately turns over his dictionary at the place where the character *water* stands at the top of the page, and proceeding with his eye directed to the margin until the numeral *six* occurs, he will soon discover the one in question; for all the characters in the language belonging to the *root water*, and composed of *six* other lines and points, will follow successively in this place. The name or sound of the character is placed immediately after it, ex-

* Barrow's Travels in China, p. 250. Encyclopædia Metropolitana, Article "China."

pressed in such other characters as are supposed to be most familiar; and in the method used for conveying this information, the Chinese, as has been already remarked, have disclosed a faint idea of alphabetical writing, by splitting the monosyllabic sound into a dissyllable, and again compressing the dissyllable into a simple sound. One instance will serve to explain this method. Suppose the name of the character under consideration to be *ping*. If no single character be found sufficiently simple to express the sound *ping*, immediately after it will be placed two well known characters *pe* and *ing*; but as every character in the language has a monosyllabic sound, it will readily be concluded that *pe* and *ing*, when compressed into one syllable, must be pronounced *ping*.*

When some progress has been made in this pursuit the general meaning of many of the characters may be determined by the eye alone, as in most cases they are found to have a reference, though often in a figurative sense, to the signification of the root, in a manner similar to that in which the objects of natural history are classed according to their specific relations. The signs, for instance, expressing the *hand* and the *heart* are two roots; and all the works of art, the different trades and manufactures, arrange themselves under the first; and all the passions, affections, and sentiments of the mind, under the latter. The root of a *unit* or *one* comprehends all the characters expressive of unity, concord, and harmony. Thus, if we observe a character compounded of two simple roots, *one* and *heart*, we can have no difficulty in concluding that it signifies unanimity; but if the sign of a *negative* should also appear in the same character, the meaning would be reversed, and the import then would be discord or dissension, literally *not*

one heart. Many proper names of persons have the character signifying *man* for their key or root ; and all foreign names have the character *mouth* or *voice* annexed, which shows at once that the character is a proper name employed only to express sound without any particular meaning.*

It is not improbable that several other languages spoken eastward of the Indus were formed on a similar principle, though, owing to the various changes they have successively undergone, few traces remain of their original structure. The Chinese, too, still hold a tradition that an intimate intercourse subsisted between their ancestors and the Egyptians at a very remote period ; whence they insinuate that the early inhabitants of the Nile were indebted to them for much of the knowledge which distinguished the countrymen of Hermes, Thoth, and Menes, at a time when the Greeks were barbarians, and the Phenicians had only begun to learn the elements of civilisation.

As a proof that the founders of Thebes and the philosophers of Meröe in their efforts to provide visible signs for their ideas followed a path similar to the one pursued by the most distant of the oriental nations, we may refer to some of the western alphabets contained in the volume which bears the name of Ahmad Bin Wahshih. Of the Hermesian kings he relates that each invented, according to his own genius and understanding, a particular alphabet, in order that none should know them but the sons of wisdom. Few therefore, he adds, understand them in our time. They took the figures of different objects, trees, plants, quadrupeds, birds, or their parts, and of planets and fixed stars. In this manner these hieroglyphical alphabets became innumerable, like the alphabets of the Indians and Chinese. They were not arranged at all in the order of our letters a, b, c, d, but they

* Barrow, p. 253.

had proper characters agreed upon by the inventors of these alphabets, and which differed in their figure and order. They understood the secrets of nature, and endeavoured to indicate every thing by an appropriate sign, so that they might express it by its appearance.

Speaking of the alphabet of Hermes the Great, used for inscriptions on the temples, pyramids, and obelisks, he remarks that it does not consist in a series of letters, but of certain figurative symbols which are calculated to lead the mind immediately and directly to the object thereby expressed. There is a sign which signifies the Almighty simply and alone; and if it was wished to point out any one of the attributes of God, something was added to the original picture. He gives examples of what he calls "celestial hieroglyphics," where the Supreme Being is represented under different emblems as all-powerful, all-merciful, all-knowing, the avenger, the nourisher, and the destroyer. Next follow angels, devils, stars, clouds, the sun, moon, and planets, light and darkness, with all the zodiacal constellations. To these are subjoined three series of hieroglyphics expressive of words: the first relating to animal actions and affections; the second to trees, plants, and their produce; and the last denoting terms and ideas belonging to minerals. The signs in all the instances now mentioned bear a striking resemblance to the elementary figures, the keys and roots of the Chinese.*

But the most interesting of all is the Shimshim alphabet, which the Arabian author pronounces antediluvian, inasmuch as it shows the transition of hieroglyphics from being

* Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphical Characters Explained; with an Account of the Egyptian Priests, their Classes, Initiation, and Sacrifices; in the Arabic language, by Ahmad Bin Abubekr Bin Wahshih; and in English by Joseph Hammer, Secretary to the Imperial Legation at Constantinople.

signs, expressive merely of ideas, to the more useful purpose of representing letters. It exhibits at the same time the different modifications of the old Syriac and Chaldaic characters. The Shimshim, according to Ahmad Bin Wahshih, was inspired by divine revelation, and varied in four different ways by the people who used it, namely, the Hermcsians, the Nabatheans, the Sabceans, and Chaldeans, the most ancient of nations, from whom he asserts all others derived their writing. It should seem that, though these four families of mankind had the same letters or alphabetical sounds, the figures were very different. The Nabatheans gave a preference to the likenesses of animals, each of which, besides conveying a vocal power, had a secret or mystical signification. If, for example, they wished to express a powerful, brave, cunning, and avaricious king, they painted the figure of a man with the head of a lion pointing with one of his fingers to a fox before him. If they wished to express the attributes of understanding, generosity, and liberality, they drew a man with a bird's head, and before him a balance, with the sun and moon. If they wished to represent him cruel, faithless, and ignorant, they gave him the head of a dog, an ass, or a boar, with a pot of fire and a sword before him. A man of perfect wisdom and understanding, accomplished in all his ways, and without the least blame, was painted with a beautiful face, having wings like an angel, and having in his hands a book on which his eyes were fixed. Before him also were a sword and a balance, and behind him two vases, one of them full of water and the other of blazing fire. Under his right foot was a ball with a crab painted on it, and under his left a deep pot full of serpents, scorpions, and different reptiles, the covering of which had the shape of an eagle's head.*

* Ancient Alphabets, &c. p. 49. "See, my son," says the author, "these are the secrets of those people, with which nobody was acquainted

The characters of the Hermesians appear to have been derived from inanimate objects, many of which are extremely fanciful and highly figurative. As it would be very inconvenient to transcribe such symbols, it will be sufficient to give the names and power of a few; the total number amounting to thirty-seven, and in this respect coinciding with the letters of the Arabian alphabet:—

| <i>Name.</i> | <i>Power.</i> | <i>Name.</i> | <i>Power.</i> |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Ayhum, | A, | Mayib, | M. |
| Yawuk, | I or Y, | Tanroas, | T. |

but themselves. I have seen in one of the hieroglyphical buildings of Upper Egypt the representation I am going to describe. This building was a temple of the Lord *Adonai*, whom sun and moon serve. It represented a coffin, adorned with curious figures and admirable ornaments. A vine growing with its leaves spread over it. The Lord was standing upon the coffin with a staff in his hand, out of the end of which a tree shot forth and overshadowed it. Behind the coffin was seen a pit full of blazing fire, and four angels, catching serpents, scorpions, and other noxious reptiles, threw them into it. On his head a crown of glory; on his right the sun, and on his left the moon, and in his hand a ring with the twelve signs of the zodiac. Before the coffin an olive tree sprouted forth, under the branches of which different kinds of animals were collected. On the left and a little farther back, a high mountain was seen, with *seven* golden towers supporting the sky. A hand stretched forth from the sky poured out light, and pointed with his fingers to the olive tree. There was also the figure of a man, whose head was in the sky and whose feet were on the earth. His hands and feet were bound. Before the Lord stood seven censers, two pots, a vase filled with perfumes, spices, and a bottle with a long neck containing storax. The hieroglyphic representing day was under his right foot, and the hieroglyphic representing night under his left. Before the Lord was laid on a high desk the book of universal nature, whereon a representation and names of the planets, the constellations, the stations, and every thing that is found in the highest heaven was painted. There was also an urn filled half with earth and half with sand (that is, the hieroglyphics of earth and sand were represented therein). A suspended everburning lamp, dates, olives, and in a vase of emerald. A table of black basalt with *seven* lines, the four elements, the figure of a man carrying away a dead body, and a dog upon a lion.

“These, O brother, are the mysterious keys to the treasures of secrets, of ancient and modern knowledge. The wise may guess the whole from a part. It is impossible to embrace here the whole extent of this knowledge. We have here stated the ground of the business, giving the representation of things in general, their ends, courses, movements, turns, and returns, so that thou mightest easily and by degrees distinguish the one from the other, and at last become master of all the secrets of the world. These hints are sufficient for him who has organs and an understanding heart.”—Pp. 50, 51.

| <i>Name.</i> | <i>Power.</i> | <i>Name.</i> | <i>Power.</i> |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Ka-a, | K hard, | Hin, | H soft. |
| Ghiwa, | G, | Thanad, | Th in think |
| Bidam, | B, | Saparan, | S. |
| Kaghach, | K soft, | Khayuri, | Kh. |
| Run, | R, | Zid, | Z. |
| Jahum, | J English, | Lughaf, | L. |
| Shá, | Sh, | Hisat, | H hard. |
| Danaz, | D, | Fisat, | F. |

The signs expressed by these names were, it is manifest, originally pictures of natural objects, which in process of time were abridged, and had their curved lines reduced into forms more suitable for the purposes of writing. In several instances the resemblance to animals is very striking, and in others to utensils of the most common use. Hence we are supplied with an Egyptian alphabet, one at least which bears the name of Hermes, constructed on principles analogous to those embodied in the Chinese symbols, but differing from the latter in the important circumstance of being phonetic.

Although it is difficult to determine how many of the eighty alphabets deciphered in the work of Wahshih may have been really used by different nations, or how many letters in every one of them have been misrepresented either by ignorance on the part of the author himself, or by the inaccuracy of his copyists; yet it may be safely asserted that there is a real foundation for the greater number, such as were not used for common writing being employed as ciphers among various tribes in the eastern world. Even at the present day these alphabets are used by the 'Turks, Persians, and Arabs, if not for purposes strictly literary, at all events for secret correspondence and confidential communications.

The three mentioned in the first chapter, the Cufic, the

Maghrabin, and the Numeral, are universally known. Cufic inscriptions are found throughout the whole extent of Arabia, Persia, Syria, Egypt, Sicily, and Spain; while the Maghrabin is the common character used at this moment in Morocco and some other of the Barbary states. The seven specified in the second chapter merit the utmost attention from the orientalist; of which the Hebrew, Syriac, and Greek are known to every scholar. The Nabathean and Nasmad or Himyaric are recorded in history, though of the latter the specimen produced by Wahshih is the first that has appeared in Europe. The difference of the Hebrew, Syriac, and Greek letters from the usual alphabets of these languages might perhaps be attributed to the mistakes of an illiterate transcriber; but, notwithstanding this apparent defect, they deserve the closest examination, for the author being by birth a Nabathean must have been well acquainted with their original form.*

There is a remarkable distinction between the labours of the Chinese in their attempt to form a language, and those of the more western nations whose alphabets we have just been considering; namely, that while the latter arrived at the invaluable discovery of phonetic characters, the former long continued to rest satisfied with signs merely expressive of ideas. The perfection which the people of China have attained in the adaptation of pictural emblems to the conveyance of thought and feeling, may perhaps be assigned as the reason why they resist the approach of change upon a system now consecrated to their patriotism by its great antiquity. It is not, however, unreasonable to believe that during a certain period the marks selected for expressing

* "As to the Himyaric letters," observes Sir William Jones, "or those which are mentioned by the name of *Almasnad*, we are still in total darkness; the traveller Niebuhr having been unfortunately prevented from visiting some ancient monuments in Yemen, which are said to have inscriptions on them."

—*Fourth Anniversary Discourse.*

the operations of mind were at once ideagraphic and phonetic; in other words, that while they were calculated to revive in the imagination the picture of an external object, they also supplied the elements of sound necessary for uttering its name.

Various efforts have been recently made to explain the true import of the Hebrew alphabet on the principle now suggested, as conveying at the same time *sense* and *sound*. The patrons of this scheme set out by deriving the characters from delineations of objects familiar to the eye even in the rudest conditions of society, being such as are usually exhibited in oriental hieroglyphics: and they maintain that in most of the letters there is less deviation from the supposed figures on which they were founded, than there is in the greater part of the enchorial inscription of the Rosetta stone, compared with the hieroglyphs of which it may be considered as the popular reading.

But it is of less consequence to prove that the origin of the Hebrew and Samaritan alphabets may be traced to hieroglyphical representations, than it is to establish the fact that, besides the aid they afford in pronunciation, they have each an independent meaning corresponding to the nature of the objects of which they were originally the pictures. If this hypothesis rests on a stable foundation, it will follow that the language of the Old Testament was at one time in precisely the same condition in which the Chinese is at present; exhibiting through the medium of certain lines and curves a distinct meaning to the eye, without being accompanied to the full extent with the capacity of being uttered in corresponding sounds.

Dr Lamb, whose name has been already mentioned, gives his countenance to the views now stated. The first step in this interesting process would, he thinks, consist in the selection of twenty-two hieroglyphs, each being the repre-

sentative of a letter, and containing that simple sound. For example, suppose the Hebrews had among their characters the picture of a lion, and that in their language this beast was called Li, they would take this figure to represent L, and wherever it appeared it would express this letter. Again, suppose they had the picture of a face, and that in their language it was called Peh, then in the same manner they would obtain the character of the letter P. And if they had the hieroglyph of a cup, and it was called Na, they would obtain from it the figure of the letter N ; and proceeding thus they would obtain two-and-twenty letters representing all the sounds of the alphabet. Now, after they had selected these there would probably remain many other pictures ; but with these the process would be very simple. Each figure would be changed into that letter which contained its sound. For example, suppose they had among their characters the figure of a foot, and it was called Al, they would, whenever they met it, render it by the letter L, which contains the sound of that word. If they had the picture of a bird, and called it Op, they would in the same manner render it by P ; and proceeding thus, with very little difficulty they would reduce the whole of their pictures, were they few or many, to the letters of the alphabet. Every word would contain as many distinct consonants as the corresponding hieroglyphic cartouche contained pictures.*

Such being the case, a question very naturally arises, Is there any language so little altered since the time of this transition as to afford the means of retranslating a part of it into its former picture-characters ? With respect to all spoken languages, it is admitted, the case must be hopeless, so great is the change which the lapse of ages must have produced in them. But the Hebrew is thought to enjoy this pe-

* Hebrew Characters derived from Hieroglyphics. p. 4.

culiarity, that as the people who originally wrote it soon ceased to use it as a vernacular dialect, we are supposed to have it now in nearly the same state in which Moses employed it when he composed the Pentateuch. "If then," says the learned author, "we could now succeed in obtaining the exact picture which each of the Hebrew characters represented, there would undoubtedly be much light thrown upon the manner in which the language was constructed; and if it should be the case that they had not a great number of pictures, but frequently repeated those which they have adopted for letters, we should probably be able to obtain the correct meaning of many ancient words. But more than this; after once the language became written, every new word would be formed by these letters, each retaining its ideal sense: there would be now as it were but one picture for each letter, and all words afterwards formed would undoubtedly belong to this class. It is clear that this mode of forming words from the ideal meaning of the letters continued down to a very late period. Hence, in a philological point of view, it is of considerable importance to establish the true meaning of the letters, as by so doing we may obtain the correct meaning of many words concerning which we are now perfectly ignorant. And the exhibition of their original pictures may lead to the explanation of some difficult passages in the Bible, and to the confirmation or illustration of those important truths in which mankind are so deeply interested."*

As the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, according to the hypothesis now under consideration, have each a separate meaning, the sense of a root is sometimes confined to one character, while in other cases it is derived from all the letters which enter into its composition. For example, * signi-

* Hebrew Characters, p. 5.

fies *man*, *priority*, *superiority* ; and \daleth denotes *lips*, *opening speaking*, *red* ; and hence $\aleph\daleth$ means *man*, *red*, \beth being merely formative. Again, \aleph signifies *first* or *chief*, and \beth a *house* ; therefore $\beth\aleph$ will mean *chief of a house*, or father. In these cases, the meaning is inherent in the letters viewed separately and independently ; and the hieroglyphs whence the alphabetical characters were derived were respectively a *man* and a *house*. The next example is perhaps more fanciful : \beth signifies *water*, a *multitude*, and \aleph as before means *first* ; hence $\beth\aleph$ will express *first of many*, a mother.*

The same principle applies when three significant letters are employed. For instance, \beth denotes a *lion* or any *quadruped*, \beth a *mouth*, and \aleph *chief* ; hence $\beth\aleph$ will signify the *chief beast of mouth*, or bellowing, that is a bull. One ex-

* The following are the meanings of the alphabetical characters, as derived from the hieroglyphical emblems :

- \aleph Man. Priority. Superiority.
- \beth House. Any building. Within. In. Son. Daughter.
- \daleth Arm and hand. Carrying. Lifting up. Height. Power. Pride.
- \daleth Lips. Speaking. Opening. Shutting. Red.
- \daleth Nostrils. Breath. Life. Living Creature.
- \daleth Feather. Lightness. Motion in air. Bird.
- \daleth Knife. Blood. Sprinkling. Drops. Red.
- \beth Bos m. Love. Concealment. Darkness. Black.
- \beth Spade. Plough. Expansion. Tool or Instrument of any kind.
- \beth Eye. Brightness. Light. Sparkling. Distinction. Man. Used in the last sense for forming proper names.
- \beth Sling. Smiting. Curvature. Circular. Similitude.
- \beth Lion. Quadruped (any). Four. Motion. To or for (sign of dative). Strength.
- \beth Water. Multitude. Number. Part. Of. From.
- \beth Cup. Pouring. Motion (as of liquid). Giving. Repetition. This letter occasionally gives a diminutive meaning.
- \beth Moon. Brightness. Whiteness. Moonshaped. Motion (revolving).
- \beth Legs and Feet. Motion. Biped. Two.
- \beth Face. Mouth. Breath. Aperture. Hole (any).
- \beth Horned animal. Horns. Horn (the substance). Moon. Branches.
- \beth Boat. Hollowness. Lightness. Emptiness (in a good or bad sense). Purity or Desolation.
- \beth Hawk. Bird. Flying. Swiftmess. Noise (of joy or sorrow). Sight.
- \beth Sun. Rising Sun. Rising. Fire. Light. White. Teeth.
- \beth Tent. Pole. Tree.

ample more will suffice to illustrate this ingenious theory : κ signifies a *boat*, *hollowness*, *emptiness*, *desolation*, γ denotes *bird*, *flight*, *noise of joy or sorrow*, and \beth a *house* ; hence $\kappa\gamma\beta$ means the *hollow house of mourning*, or the tomb.

It ought to be observed that the letters composing any word may, like the hieroglyphs in a cartouche, be read in any order ; beginning at either end or in the middle, or even placing them in a perpendicular position. The meaning of the whole is to be obtained by determining the import of each taken separately ; and this import must be learned from studying the original figure whence the form of the letter was derived. It is supposed that the descriptive hieroglyph from which the word שמש “ the sun ” is taken may have been $\overset{w}{\square}$, “ half the sun above the water and half

$\underset{a}{\square}$ the sun below the water.” The term now quoted, it is well known, combines the ideas of light and water, and is throughout the Sacred Writings with a slight alteration applied to the visible heavens.

There is, Dr Lamb remarks, a usage of the letter \aleph which, though extremely important, he did not discover until he had fixed the meanings of all the other characters in the Hebrew alphabet. It may, he found, be joined to any other letter so as to imply that such letter is to be taken in its primitive sense ; for there seems reason to conclude that, after a picture came to bear several *derived* meanings, it appeared necessary to have some token to show that it was intended to convey to the mind the *original* idea. For instance, when at length the picture of a lion had come to signify *any quadruped*, *strength*, or *fortitude*, if they wished to define “ a lion,” it was necessary to make some distinction, and this was done by an \aleph signifying “ first,” that is to say,

the “first meaning.” And this $\bar{\kappa}$, in forming the phonetic word, frequently became π .

The application of this theory to proper names is not every where attended with a degree of success equal to the ingenuity of the author, though in some cases it will be admitted that the coincidence is sufficiently striking. Abel is said to mean *son of living creature*, being composed of the characters α “son,” and η “living creature.” Enoch means *the little bird of my bosom*, from α “like,” ν “the little bird,” and π “of my bosom.” Seth is derived from π *set up*, and ϖ *of fair complexion*. Jabal means *a man, son of animal*, from α a man, α a son, and λ an animal. Shem ϖ signifies the *white* or *fair twin*. Cham $\eta\alpha$ *the dark* or *black twin*. Japhet $\eta\alpha$ denotes “the man of the opening of the tent,” from α “the man,” η “the opening,” and π “of the tent.” That this is the correct meaning the author presumes there can be no doubt from the prophecy of Noah; the whole sense of which depends upon a right interpretation of this word. In the 27th verse of the ninth chapter of Genesis the patriarch says respecting his eldest son:—

יפת אלהים ליפת וישכן באחלי שם

The verb which is here used is the same as the proper name, and it is as if we said in English “God will japhet to Japhet;” that is, God will open wide the tent-door to Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem. The verb which is rendered “to dwell” is שכן (Shacan) constantly applied to the residence of God, and is the root of shechinah. We have here then, it is supposed, a remarkable prophecy respecting the call of the Gentiles to the rights and privileges of the Jewish church, many years before the birth of Abraham; for the passage literally implies this, “God shall open wide the door of the tabernacle to the descendants

of Japhet, and they shall possess the tabernacle of the children of Shem.

The explanation of the sacred name ELOHIM, written at length אֱלֹהִים, appears quite satisfactory. In this word, it is said, we have nothing less than a translation into phonetic characters of the image by which our first parent communicated to his descendants his knowledge of the Creator ; and this was the only name by which the Almighty was known until the days of Seth, after the birth of Enos ; for such is conceived to be the meaning of the twenty-sixth verse of the fourth chapter of Genesis, “ Then men began to call upon (or invoke by) the name of Jehovah.” In the vision of Ezekiel, the cherubim are described as having the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle. The fourth chapter of the Revelation exhibits a similar representation. “ Before the throne was a sea like unto crystal ; and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four beasts, full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. The “ living creature,” which Ezekiel saw by the river of Chebar, and the four beasts which St John beheld in his mystic vision, are evidently the same.

“ I will now show,” says Dr Lamb, “ how this vision would be represented in hieroglyphical characters ; א a man ; ל a lion ; ר a bird ; ה a living creature ; ים eyes many. And these hieroglyphics give us the phonetic word אֱלֹהִים (ELOHIM). Hence it appears that החיה (ha chajah) חיה, the “ living creature which appeared to Ezekiel and to St John, is precisely the same as that which appeared to Adam during the paradisaical state. And the image by which our first parent communicated his knowledge of the Creator to his descendants was a picture of that vision which

appeared to Ezekiel and St John, to one under the Jewish, and to the other under the Christian dispensation. To the abuse of this glorious manifestation of the Creator to Adam we can trace all that animal worship which prevailed at so early a period of man's history. As in process of time the descendants of Adam increased and multiplied, they necessarily separated from the visible image of the Deity, which was preserved to them after the fall by the cherubim on the Mount of Eden. They idolatrously made for themselves representations from the picture of אֱלֹהִים which they carried with them ; and hence the LION, BULL, and the EAGLE became the especial objects of their adoration.”*

Hence we are taught to conclude that the first part of the Book of Genesis, consisting of ten chapters, was originally a collection of hieroglyphical pictures handed down from Adam and Noah ; and that the remaining portion was written by the successive patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and completed after the death of Joseph by one of the same family. It is imagined by the Master of Corpus Christi College that the discovery, or rather the invention of letters, took place about the time that the son of Terah travelled into Egypt. But though this great improvement was then attained, it does not follow that the sacred pictures were immediately translated, or even if they were, that they would not be still carefully preserved ; on the same principle that the Egyptians, long after they possessed an alphabet, continued to use their hieroglyphs as a consecrated language. It is deemed probable that the Israelites, at the period of their migration, were familiar with the picture-history of the cosmogony ; and in support of this opinion we are referred to

* Hebrew Characters derived from Hieroglyphics, p. 82. The cartouche for Elohim is supposed to be this, ל We cannot add the hieroglyphs,

א ב ג

ד

which of course are pictures or emblems,

the twenty-fifth chapter of Exodus, where cherubims are mentioned without giving any description of them, as if the figures were perfectly well known to the people. In the thirty-second chapter of the same book we find that the Hebrew host, disappointed that their leader did not return from the mount so soon as they expected him, call upon Aaron to make them a god; upon which the high-priest, perfectly understanding their request, fabricates an image, and says to them, "This is your Elohim, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt."*

It is not unworthy of notice that the sacred historian, when relating this event, does not deign to honour the image with the title of Elohim, but in contempt calls it *עֵלֶל* a calf; and Aaron himself, who when he first made it called it a god, was no sooner convinced by his brother of the sin he had committed in framing a likeness of the Deity, than he changed his mode of speech, and gave it the name of the animal whose form it represented.

The author now quoted is inclined to think when Moses, under the inspiration of God, edited the books of the Law, he prefixed to them the history of Abraham and his posterity, as preserved by the children of Israel, and at the same time translated their sacred records of the creation and history of man down to the dispersion at Babel as we now have them. As this people like all others held their ancient records in the highest veneration, their lawgiver, it is thought, would adhere as closely to the original as possible; and hence the reason why the early part of the Book of Genesis is so concise, and evidently partaking of the nature of a hieroglyphical narrative. It is also supposed probable that passages which

* Hebrew Characters, p. 72. "Nothing," says Dr Lamb, "can be more improbable than the notion entertained by some commentators that this had any connection with the idolatrous worship of the Egyptians, whose gods the Israelites considered their Elohim had overcome."

now appear obscure to us were perfectly intelligible to those who, with the Hebrew text, had before them the ancient pictures from which it was derived. When the Books of Moses became the Sacred Writings of the nation, the ancient hieroglyphs would be discarded, and in the course of a few generations entirely forgotten.*

It is here assumed that the use of letters has, in some degree a natural connection with the hieroglyphical system which every where preceded the invention of a phonetic alphabet ; and that while the one, under the form of quipos, pictures, and emblems, characterizes a rude condition of society, the other marks an advanced state of civilisation. Nor can it be denied, perhaps, that the signs which denote ideas have usually suggested those which merely express sounds ; and that, in all cases where the former have been retained in preference to the latter, the choice has been determined on considerations foreign to the comparative advantages of the two methods viewed as the channel of communicating thought. But strong objections have, nevertheless, been raised against the theory which supposes that the use of a character, as the sign of an idea, should lead the way to its use as the sign of something totally unconnected with that idea, namely, the element of an articulate sound, having by itself neither meaning nor power.

On this question Dr Wall opposes himself to Warburton and Dr Young, both of whom held the opinion that the arbitrary characters used by the Egyptians, the Mexicans, and the Chinese, naturally conduct the mind to letters ; the invention of which, it is admitted on all hands, constitutes the final step in the improvement of writing. The reasoning of the bishop on this subject has been well received, being supported not only by his great talents and learning,

* Hebrew Hieroglyphics, p. 75.

but also by an accumulation of facts to which the attention of the scientific world had not been previously drawn, viewed as the basis of a philological argument. The connection, moreover, which this inquiry is acknowledged to have with the nature of the primitive writing that prevailed among the Jews, gave it a degree of importance highly favourable to a patient acquiescence, even when his conclusions seemed to call for a more minute investigation of the grounds whereon they were made to rest. Nor is this importance diminished by the recent discoveries in hieroglyphical composition. The use of phonetic characters by the Egyptians as well as by the Chinese seems to establish the accuracy of the ingenious prelate's inductions ; a tribute to his system which has also been paid by Dr Young, one of the best authorities in modern times. 'This distinguished philosopher, upon deciphering the word Ptolemy in the Rosetta inscription, remarks, that " in this and a few other proper names, it is extremely interesting to trace some of the steps by which alphabetical writing seems to have arisen out of hieroglyphical ; a process which may indeed be in some measure illustrated by the manner in which the modern Chinese express a foreign combination of sounds, the characters being rendered simply phonetic by an appropriate mark, instead of retaining their natural signification ; and this mark in some modern printed books approaches very near to the ring surrounding the hieroglyphic names."*

The opinions now stated may appear to derive some confirmation from the fact, not disputed by any author, that the rude method of picture-writing has, in all parts of the world, given place first to arbitrary signs, and then to the more perfect mode of alphabetical composition ; whence the

* Wall's Inquiry into the Origin of Alphabetical Writing, with which is incorporated an Essay on the Egyptian Hieroglyphics, p. 29. Article "Egypt," in Supplement to Ency. Brit. p. 62.

inference may be legitimately drawn that the one has an inherent tendency to lead to the other. Dr Wall himself, indeed, admits the uniformity of this principle, and allows that, however the process may have been varied in other respects, by peculiarity of habits and tastes among different nations, there is one circumstance which has constantly characterized it, namely, that in every instance it has *tended* to the class of arbitrary signs ; so that wherever sufficient time has been given for the due operation of causes affecting our common nature, and accidental impediments have not interposed, it has actually *reached* that class. Hence, although the principal kinds of writing invented by man,—the Egyptian, the Mexican, and the Chinese,—are distinguished from one another by the predominance in them respectively of *pictural*, of *metaphorical*, and of *arbitrary* characters, yet in all of them some portion of this last class may be observed ; and in the Chinese writing, which has been longer in use than any of the rest, these characters have so increased as to have excluded both the others.

But, notwithstanding this apparent concession, it is maintained that the ideagraphic use of signs, instead of leading towards the phonetic one, has in fact the very opposite tendency, and draws off the mind from the practice adopted in alphabetical reading ; that, namely, of using the elementary sounds without any signification, and combining them to form significant words. Hence it is asserted that, wherever there is found a phonetic employment of ideagraphic characters, the phenomenon must have arisen from a source totally independent of the intrinsic nature of hieroglyphical writing.*

As the hypothesis advocated by Warburton is familiar to every reader, it will be sufficient to state, that from his review of the ancient methods used for holding intercourse

* Wall's Inquiry, p. 31.

by means of visible signs, he was satisfied that he had brought down the general history of writing, by a gradual and easy descent, from a *picture* to a *letter*. It was his opinion that the Chinese characters, which participate of Egyptian hieroglyphics on the one hand and of alphabetical notation on the other, are on the very border of letters ; an alphabet to express *sounds* instead of *things* being only a compendium of that large volume of arbitrary marks. Some alphabets, he adds, as the Ethiopic and Coptic, have adopted hieroglyphic figures to compose their letters, as may be seen both from their shapes and names. The Egyptians, it is alleged, followed the same practice ; and the description of the Greek characters seems to denote that even the western nations had respect to a similar principle in explaining the origin of literature properly so called. The words *σημεία* and *σημάτια* signify as well the images of natural things as artificial marks or characters ; and *γραφω* means both to paint and to write. Want of attention to this natural and easy progress of hieroglyphical images, from pictures to phonetic signs, made Plato and Cicero conclude that an alphabet could not be the invention of man, but must be the gift of the immortal gods.*

The course of the Mexican empire, subjoins this learned writer, was too short to improve pictures into hieroglyphics ; and the “ Chinese, which, in its long duration, hath brought this picture down through hieroglyphics to a simple mark or character, has not yet (from the poverty of its inventive genius and its aversion to foreign commerce) been able to find out an abridgment of those marks by letters. It was the old and well established monarchy of Egypt, so propitious to arts and civil policy, which carried the *picture* through all the stages of its improvement quite down to *letters*,—the

invention of this ingenious people. Now, such a general concurrence in the method of recording the thoughts can never be supposed the effect of chance, imitation, or partial purposes, but must needs be esteemed the universal voice of nature speaking to the first rude conceptions of mankind; for the reader may be pleased to observe, that not only the Chinese of the East, the Mexicans of the West, and the Egyptians of the South, but the Scythians likewise of the North (not to speak of the intermediate inhabitants of the earth, the Indians, Phenicians, Ethiopians, and Etruscans), all used the same way of writing by picture and hieroglyphic.”*

The author of the Inquiry into the Origin of Alphabetical Writing denies the possibility of ever arriving at letters through the medium of hieroglyphs. He maintains that the inventive powers of man could never accomplish the first step from ideographic to phonetic signs. But supposing that the human being had by his own efforts attained in some unaccountable manner to this discovery, he would still, says Dr Wall, be immeasurably distant from an alphabet. “The possibility of the two steps which he would yet have to take in order to get to letters, is almost as inconceivable as of that first one, to which it has been already proved he never could have been conducted by the nature of the case.”†

In fact, so far from admitting the facility of transition from arbitrary signs of ideas to arbitrary signs of sounds,—one of the circumstances on which Warburton grounds his reasoning,—this writer maintains that the supposition of the

* Warburton as above. The bishop quotes Tacitus (*Ann. lib. xi. c. 14*), who says, “*Primi per figuras animalium Ægypti sensus mentis effingebant (ea antiquissima monumenta memoriæ humanæ impressa saxis cernuntur) et litterarum scirent inventores perhibent; inde Phœnices, qui mari prepollebant, intulisse Græciæ, glorianque adeptos, tanquam repererint quæ acceperant.*”

† Part I. chapter i. p. 31.

one use being derived from the other involves a downright contradiction. The bishop, alluding to the change of manner which took place in the delineation of hieroglyphical figures, remarks that hitherto the animal or thing represented was drawn out graphically; but when the study of philosophy had inclined the learned among the Egyptians to write much and variously, this exact manner of delineating would be found too tedious. By degrees, therefore, they perfected another character which we may call the running-hand of hieroglyphics, resembling the Chinese writing, which being at first formed only by the outlines of each figure, became at length a kind of mark. One natural effect, he farther observes, which this running-hand would in time produce, was that the use would take off the attention from the *symbol* and fix it on the *thing signified*; by which means the study of symbolic writing would be much abbreviated, as the reader or decipherer would then have little to do but to remember the power of the symbolic mark, whereas before the properties of the animal or thing employed as a symbol were to be studied. In a word, this, together with their other marks, by *institution*, to design mental ideas, would reduce the characters to the present state of the Chinese. And these were, properly speaking, what the ancients called *hierographical*, used afterwards on subjects which at an earlier period had employed hieroglyphs exclusively.

In support of these views the bishop refers to Apuleius, who, speaking of his initiation into the mysteries of Isis, describes the ritual—which was composed partly in symbolic and partly in hieroglyphical characters of arbitrary institution—in this manner:—The hierophant “drew out from the secret repositories of the sanctuary certain books written in unknown characters, which contained the words of the sacred formula, compendiously expressed, partly by *figures*

of animals, and partly by certain *marks* or *knots intricately knotted, revolving in the manner of a wheel*, and crowded together and curled inward like the tendrils of a vine, so as to hide the meaning from the curiosity of the profane.”*

This hieroglyphical writing, according to the theory of Warburton, leads us by an easy step to the third species or Epistolographic: for, says he, “we are now come to one of those links of the chain which served to connect *hieroglyphic marks* and *alphabetical characters*; the first of which contained kuriologic or symbolical signs of things; the other comprised signs of words by *arbitrary institution*. For those hieroglyphic marks, which were *signs of things by arbitrary institution*, partook of the proper hieroglyphics in being *signs for things*, and of alphabetical letters in being *signs by institution*. And the contrivance of employing these arbitrary marks to design all the primitive sounds of the human voice was inventing an *alphabet*.”†

The learned author was not insensible to the difficulty of uniting the ideagraphic character with the phonetic; he saw the chasm which divides the system of pictural-writing from that founded on letters viewed as the mere representatives of vocal utterance; and yet, he remarks, “if we would but reflect a little on the nature of sound and its unheeded connection with the objects of sight, we should be able to conceive how the chasm closed, and how the passage from a *real* to a *literary* character was begun and smoothed out.” His reasoning on this point, at once ingenious and satisfactory, is as follows:—

As long as the entire picture or image of the thing repre-

* “De opertis adyti profert quosdam libros litteris ignorabilibus prænotatos: partim figuris ejusmodi animalium, concepti sermonis compendiosa verba suggerentes: partim nodosis, et in modum rotæ tortuosis, capreolæque condensis apicibus, a curiositate profanorum lectione munita.”—*Apul. Metamor.* lib. ii.

† Divine Legation, vol. iv. p. 151.

sented was placed before the eye of the hieroglyphic reader, it could associate in his mind no idea but that of the particular object whose form it expressed. But when at a later period the picture by being contracted into a sign or mark ceased to be a portrait, the view of this mark, in the course of time, would as naturally raise in the mind the *sound* expressing the idea of the thing, as the *idea* itself. How this extension, from the idea to the sound, in the use of the hieroglyph first arose, will be easily conceived by those who reflect on the numerous tribe of words in all languages which are formed on the sound emitted by the thing or animal. When men had once observed how small the number is of primitive sounds, and how infinite the words are which may be formed by varied combinations of them, it would naturally occur to the more reflective that a very few of those *marks*, which had before casually excited the sensation of those simple sounds and were in some degree associated with them, might be selected and arranged so as to express them all. This process may be identified with the formation of an alphabet; "and then," says the bishop, "their old accustomed way of combining primitive sounds into words would as naturally and easily direct them to a like combination of what were now become the simple marks of sound; from whence would arise *literary writing*."

It is also remarked that, in the early language of men, the simple sounds would be used, whether out of choice or necessity, as significative words or terms, to denote the objects with which they were most familiar. These sounds, without arbitrary institution, would excite the idea of the thing, sometimes as its *audible image*, sometimes as its *natural representative*. Therefore the old *marks* for things, to which words of this original belonged, would certainly be first adopted for the figures of those *alphabetical* letters, by the ingenious persons who invented this wonderful contriv-

ance. And in fact this, which appears so natural, has been found to be actually the case; the most early alphabets being framed from the outlines of those figures in the pictorial characters, which, by use in their hieroglyphic state, had acquired the property of associating in the mind the sound as well as the *thing*.*

It is not unreasonable to suppose that, while this change was in progress various alphabets were introduced, suited to the several subjects on which the learned felt an inducement to write. The astronomer might select phonetic symbols from the field of his peculiar study, and convert to his use, as letters, the names or signs by means of which he was wont to denote the host of heaven. The botanist might adopt a similar process; and even the zoologist might choose from his catalogue a sufficient number of terms, of which the initial sounds would supply him with alphabetical elements. In support of this suggestion, which is merely mentioned in passing, reference might be made to the eighty alphabets collected by Abubeker Bin Wahshih. We find among them, for example, “hieroglyphics to express words relative to animal actions and affections; hieroglyphics significant of words relating to trees and plants, and their produce; and hieroglyphics expressive of words and ideas belonging to minerals.”†

Whatever truth there may be in this conjecture, there can be no doubt that numerous alphabets were formed by different

* Divine Legation, vol. iv. p. 156.

† The learned Arabian, after expounding the enigmas of the ancients, according to his views of their philosophy, exclaims, “Learn, then, O reader, the secrets, mysteries, and treasures of the hieroglyphics, not to be found, and not to be discovered any where else. Formerly a knowledge of them could not be acquired but by immense pains and expense, by a great number of years and a long course of travels, and now, lo! these treasures are laid open for thy enjoyment. Take possession of them, keep and guard them with the utmost care and secrecy. Profoundly learned philosophers and curious students only have attained this knowledge.”—*Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphic Characters Explained*, &c. p. 31.

orders of men, who, actuated by motives which cannot any longer be fully understood, chose to have secret channels for communicating their professional knowledge. Sanchoniathon, for example, is said to have composed his history by the assistance of certain records which he found in the temples, written in Ammonean letters, not understood by the people. Bochart explains these characters to be such as the priests used in sacred matters. On the authority of Thrasyllus, quoted by Diogenes Laertius, we learn that Democritus wrote two books, the one of *the sacred letters of the Babylonians*, the other, of *the sacred letters of the city of Meröe*; and concerning these last Heliodorus remarks, that the Ethiopians had two sorts of letters, the one called *regal*, the other *vulgar*; and that the regal resembled the sacerdotal characters of the Egyptians. Theodoret, speaking of the Grecian temples in general, says that they had certain forms of letters for their own use called *sacerdotal*; and Fourmount supposes that this general custom prevailed among the Jews also; an opinion which seems confirmed by a passage in Irenæus, who remarks that “the ancient letters of the Hebrews, which were called sacerdotal, are ten in number.”*

Still the conclusions of the Warburtonian school, as to the transition of hieroglyphs into phonetic characters, are met by the assertion, that the history of the world presents no example of alphabetical writing having originated in the unaided powers of the human mind. No great stress indeed is laid on the simple method of epistolary communication which prevailed on the American continent when first visited by Europeans; though it is clear that, as no alphabet

* Iren. advers. Hær. lib. ii. c. 44. Cette coutume de la plupart des nations orientales, d'avoir des caractères sacrés, et des caractères profanes ou d'un usage plus vulgaire, étoit aussi chez les Hebreux. Reflex. Crit. vol. i. p. 36, quoted by Warburton, book iv. sect. 4. p. 159.

was found among the natives, the presumption against their capacity to invent one is thereby not a little strengthened. Writing of different sorts was at that period practised by the Mexicans, the Peruvians, and even the savages in some northern districts, yet nowhere among them was detected the slightest trace of letters or of any phonetic signs whatever. It is added, moreover, that all vestiges of the kind have been equally wanting in every newly-discovered country. In a word, alphabetical writing has never been met with in any place where its existence, owing to the absence of intercourse with other parts of the globe, would have rendered its human origin in any degree probable. "Surely," says Dr Wall, "here is a powerful argument, from actual experiment, against the discovery of an alphabet in any age, and particularly in the early ages of the world; this discovery has not, in fact, been yet made by the Chinese—a people placed in circumstances the most favourable for making it that can well be conceived."*

This reasoning, however ingenious it may appear, will not, I think, upon a careful examination of its principles, be found convincing. The mere circumstance that an art or science cannot be traced to its origin is no proof that it is supernatural; though the ancients, it is well known, were accustomed in all such cases to ascribe to the immortal gods every invention which could not be claimed by a human author. As the power of verbal communication might seem inseparable from our intellectual nature, the history of language unfortunately did not engage the attention of the early philosophers; who satisfied their own curiosity, and imagined they provided sufficiently for that of future ages, by ascertaining the progress of alphabetical signs from Egypt to Phenicia, and from the latter country into Greece.

* Inquiry into the Origin of Alphabetical Writing, p. 93.

The Sacred Scriptures also are silent on this important subject, or only mention, in an incidental manner, such facts as lead to the inference that the use of letters was common in the time of the Hebrew legislator. A similar degree of obscurity hangs over the commencement of other arts still more necessary than an alphabetical notation to the subsistence and well-being of society. In the Book of Exodus there are frequent allusions to mechanical contrivances, which imply not only some knowledge of chemistry, but also a profound acquaintance with other branches of physical science that could not have sprung up in a barbarous age. Engraving on precious stones, for example, is an operation which cannot be performed by any people to whom the higher arts, improved by philosophical processes, are not perfectly familiar. The manufacture of fine linen, the various colours produced by dyeing, and the complete mastery which the craftsmen possessed over the most refractory metals, suggest a state of civilisation in which no other invention could have appeared surprising. But of these acquirements no history is given in the annals of the Jewish nation; while, if we turn to pagan writers, we find them ascribed to certain divinities who made the instruction of mankind their care, and who conveyed to them from heaven the elements of refinement and the inspiration of genius.

The structure of an alphabet is no doubt one of the greatest triumphs of human reflection, and has proved one of its most gratifying rewards. But, notwithstanding, if it be compared with the researches of astronomy, that marvellous science which explains the mechanism of the solar system, and reveals principles which perhaps extend to the movements of the whole created universe, it cannot be pronounced altogether beyond the reach of unassisted reason. All nations, it is manifest from the records which remain, have pursued the invention in the same path; they have adopted

expedients so strikingly similar that they might almost be declared identical ; and the improvements to which they attained have left no doubt that the tendency of the successive changes made by them, in the signs which they employed, was uniformly directed towards phonetic characters.

Nor has the combination of a particular sound with an external mark been every where regarded as such an unparalleled effort of ingenuity as is sometimes imagined. Were language not spoken, it is indeed improbable that any device would ever suggest itself by which it might be addressed to the ear as well as to the eye ; but as, in all states of society, words are uttered before they are committed to any kind of cipher or symbol, their vocal qualities are closely associated in the recollection before their graphic appearance can be distinctly analyzed by the most dexterous pupil. If *beth* in any country signifies a house, and a figure is drawn to denote a human dwelling, it may be presumed that the *picture* and the *name* will be always connected in the mind of him who uses the term in question ; and hence, in his intercourse with those around him, a particular *sound* will be always linked with a definite *object*, whether delineated as a resemblance, or expressed in articulate syllables. If at a subsequent period the written sign shall pass into a merely conventional character, and *beth* be denoted by a line or a circle, the sound will nevertheless remain the same ; and one step will have been thereby made towards a phonetic system, because the farther the graphic representation departs from a *likeness*, the nearer it approaches to an alphabetical use. At this stage, if it were necessary to record the name of a distinguished individual, would it not naturally occur to the student of language to employ, for this purpose, such of the hieroglyphic characters as were familiarly used for indicating ordinary objects, and were therefore closely associated with the most common sounds ? As words in the simple condi-

tions of life are for the most part monosyllabic, a list of vocables would only be a list of syllables ; and as the consonants are generally at the beginning, nothing more would be required than the pronunciation of the selected terms to convey to the ear the appellation of the hero or prince.

The case now supposed for the sake of illustration is converted into a philological principle by the history of the Egyptians as well as of the Chinese. The method adopted by the former has been placed in a clear light by several learned commentaries on the Rosetta stone : and as to the latter people, when they wish to express in their dictionaries the sound which in their language corresponds to the meaning of a new character, they do this by placing after it two others which are well known, the sounds agreeing to which are such, that the beginning of the first combined with the end of the second will make up the required enunciation. In other words, to convey to the mind of the reader an unknown syllable, they put together two of their letters ; and the beginning of the name of the first letter combined with the end of the name of the second gives the sought syllable. Thus, if the letters *tsai* and *ho* were put together, they would denote the syllable *tso* ; but if their order were inverted, they would give the syllable *hai*. They call the letters which are combined in the way now described the *mother* characters, and the syllable which arises out of their combination the *daughter*.*

Another expedient has been already mentioned, when describing the class of Chinese signs denominated *Hing-shing*, where of two symbols one is ideographic and the other phonetic ; that is, the first denotes an object, and the second a mere sound. For example, the people of China have a generic character for *fish* ; but when they wish to

* Inquiry, &c. p. 97.

designate any particular species, the carp or the salmon, they add a second character, which, though it has no relation to fish, yet when *pronounced*, gives the spoken word applied to the carp or the salmon. *Yu* signifies a fish generically; whereas the term *li*, which really means a measure of distance, denotes the *sound* or word used when speaking of a carp.

The same object is also accomplished by means of what in China are called Tonic Dictionaries, wherein there is not only a table of the 214 roots, but another containing all the words arranged under them and accompanied by their pronunciation, which last is brought about by a very simple contrivance, nearly the same as that used in old times by the Egyptians for the expression of proper names. A small number of words, the most ancient and common in the language, are selected to express all the initial and final sounds it comprehends. Those sounds when combined are so few as to form only 450 syllables; but by the application of the four tones or accents their number is extended to 1203. At the beginning of every section of the Tonic Dictionaries two of these selected characters are placed, followed by the word *t'hysei*, which means "divide;" signifying, as in the former example, that the first half of the one is to be added to the last half of the other. Thus the words *ts'hyei-wen-fu* signify, add the *w* of *wen* to the *u* of *fu*, and they will form *wu*. As every word is a monosyllable, beginning with a consonant and terminating in a simple vowel, the initial and final sounds are all that are requisite. To express the former thirty-six words have been set apart, and a hundred and eight for the latter, and they are arranged in classes, so that these initials and finals form what may be called the Chinese alphabet.*

The inventive power which could proceed so far might

* Ency. Metropol. Article "China."

certainly have travelled over the whole space that divides ideographic from alphabetical characters. He who first employed a mark for the expression of vocal sound achieved in fact the discovery in question. The reasons which have attached the Chinese to their imperfect system of notation, were derived, perhaps, from a source similar to that whence sprang the prejudices of the Egyptians in favour of their peculiar method. But, whatever might be the cause of their aversion or indifference for alphabetical writing, the absence of this more convenient scheme from their national literature cannot be ascribed to ignorance. They were both surrounded by nations who were in the constant habit of using it. The Chinese, for instance, could not possibly be unacquainted with the manner of writing practised by their neighbours of Thibet, and by the learned castes in the various provinces of India; whilst with regard to the inhabitants of the valley watered by the Nile, their darkness on this important point might have been removed by a very slight attention to the usages of the Hebrews, the Arabians, the Persians, and Chaldeans. Even on the supposition that the priests of Egypt knew nothing beyond their hieroglyphs, at the time when Moses led his countrymen into the desert of Horeb, they must soon afterwards have heard of the revelation made at Mount Sinai by the God of the Israelites, who is imagined to have sent down from that holy hill the first specimen of alphabetical composition. There was a frequent intercourse between Jerusalem and Memphis; Jeroboam and other disaffected subjects of Solomon were wont to take refuge at the court of Pharaoh: and a daughter of the Egyptian monarch afterwards became the spouse of the wise king of Judea. In such circumstances it is not easy to conceive how a discovery of such importance should have failed to reach the inquisitive philosophers of Heliopolis and Dendera.

It may be presumed, therefore, that the adherence of the Chinese and Egyptians to their ideagraphic method arose not from their want of talent to comprehend the nature and use of an alphabet, but from the opinion that the former possessed advantages of which the other was incapable. In confirmation of this view, it may be mentioned that every one who has made any progress in the knowledge of the written character used in China is enraptured with its beauties. Dr Marshman says, "It is a study, the pleasure resulting from which is so great, and the field of research it opens so interesting, as scarcely to permit its being extinguished but with life itself." Dr Morrison's judgment was not less in its favour: "To convey ideas to the mind by the eye the Chinese language answers all the purposes of a written medium, as well as the alphabetic system of the west, and perhaps in some respects better. As sight is quicker than hearing, so ideas reaching the mind by the eye are quicker, more striking, and vivid than those which reach the mind through the slower progress of sound. The character forms a feature which really is, or by early association is considered, beautiful and impressive. The Chinese fine writing darts upon the mind with a vivid flash; a force and a beauty of which alphabetical language is incapable. Chinese writing is also more permanent than the alphabetic system, which is ever varying its spelling with the continually changing pronunciation of the living voice. Perhaps the Chinese written language has contributed in some degree to the unity of the Chinese nation."*

* Marshman's *Clavis Sinica*, and Introduction to Dr Morrison's Chinese Dictionary, p. xi. We learn from the last mentioned of these authors that the Chinese themselves sometimes dilate on the great advantages of their language. One of the writers says, "It appears to me that the people of *Fan* (Thibet) distinguish sounds; and with them the stress is laid on the sounds, not on the letters. Chinese distinguish the characters, and lay the stress on the characters, not on the sounds. Hence in the language of

In addition to the mere convenience which arises from long usage, and the preference produced by national feeling, the Egyptians are supposed to have been actuated by superstitious motives in retaining their hieroglyphic forms after the neighbouring tribes had adopted alphabetical signs. But adverting for a moment to the hypothesis that the knowledge of letters was communicated in a miraculous manner to the leader of the Hebrews in the wilderness, it will naturally occur even to the least reflecting mind to inquire, why so signal a benefaction was so long delayed. It is admitted to be at least probable that the history of the creation, of the antediluvian patriarchs, and perhaps of Abraham's family, was already committed to some species of record; and if the instruction of mankind in the truths of religion is held as the reason which induced the Almighty to make known to the Israelites the advantage of alphabetical characters, does it not follow that, as the want must have been felt at an earlier period, the necessity of supplying it must also have been previously manifest?

Certainly it becomes us not to devise rules for the proceedings of Divine Providence; still, as a cause is suggested for the discovery vouchsafed at the giving of the law, we may be allowed to examine into its probability by a reference to the special object in view, as well as to the general condition of the world at a prior era. All that was written before the exode must, according to the opinion now considered, have been composed in hieroglyphs; including, as we have already seen, the sublime work which bears the name

Fan there is an endless variety of sound; with the Chinese there is an endless variety of the character. In *Fan* the principles of sound excite an admiration, but the letters are destitute of beauty. In Chinese the characters are capable of ever-varying intelligible modifications, but the sounds are not possessed of nice and minute distinctions. The people of *Fan* prefer the sounds, and what they obtain enters by the ear; the Chinese prefer the beautiful character, and what they obtain enters by the eye."

of Job, and likewise the genealogical tables of the patriarchal houses, from Noah down to the eightieth year of the son of Amram. In connection with this argument, it may not be superfluous to repeat the observation stated above, that Moses was commanded to “write in a book” several injunctions previously to the reception of the tables of stone ; and that, when the same order is issued to him and his followers, long after the ten commandments were put into their hands, no allusion is made to any change in the *manner of writing*. Nor do we find that the Jews, remarkable for their love of tradition, have transmitted any narrative or legend relative to this origin of an alphabet. The assurance that the tables were written “with the finger of God” did not suggest even to the fanciful minds of their Rabbins and Talmudists the notion that an entirely new character was used on the mount ; or that Jehovah chose the hour at which his law was promulgated for conveying to the human race the most valuable instrument for promoting the success of literature and science.

Besides it is not doubted by any class of antiquarian philologists that the characters of the oldest alphabets were borrowed from hieroglyphical delineations : or, in other words, from imitations of the objects of sense. The gradual progress from the picture to the letter can be distinctly traced in the Hebrew, and in its more primitive form the Samaritan ; and accordingly the meaning or power associated with the rude drawing is observed to have been sometimes transferred to the alphabetical sign by which it was supplanted. If \aleph was once the figure of a man, and denoted pre-eminence or priority, it will not be surprising to learn that, in every term where that letter appears as a radical, the same notions of excellence or originality are implied.

In short, if there be any truth in Dr Lamb’s theory of “Hebrew Hieroglyphics,” it must be allowed not only that

the invention of an alphabet was effected by human ingenuity, but also that it arose from the gradual development of the ideographic scheme to which mankind had been previously accustomed. Assuming the soundness of these speculative views, we find as a result what might be expected to follow, that the power of the several letters corresponds to the import of the hieroglyphs from which they are respectively derived. For example, the letter ס is formed from a hieroglyphic character which signifies "to smite;" and accordingly the idea of smiting is comprehended in most of the words where ס occurs as a part of the root. Again, פ represents the picture of a man's legs and feet; and hence all the meanings of this letter relate to the image now mentioned, *motion*, *biped*, or the number *two*. In its primitive sense it was only found in union with ל as we now have it in the verb עלה "to go up." Finally, נ is the representative of a tent, and its ideal meanings, considered simply as a Hebrew character, are observed to agree with its derivation. It signifies a tent, pole, or tree; and in the thirty-fourth chapter of Numbers it occurs as the verb נחה "to stake out." The term נח is at present usually found denoting an upper chamber; but its original import was that of tent. The orientals, it is every where known, build their houses with flat roofs, upon which they are wont at certain seasons of the year to erect pavilions or temporary structures covered with canvass, and hence it has come to signify the uppermost room. We have this letter again in its primitive form in the word נח "a domestic man, one who dwells much in the tent;" for so it is explained to us in Genesis xxv. 27; "and the youths grew: and Esau was a man knowing in hunting, a man of the field; but Jacob was an artless man, staying within the tent."*

* Lamb's "Hebrew Characters derived from Hieroglyphics," p. 48. I have translated the word נח artless. The Septuagint give *ἄπλαστος*, *verus*,

Few readers may be disposed to adopt this hypothesis in its full extent, and to recognise in the Hebrew alphabet the representatives of as many ideographic signs or hieroglyphs. But if the principle be admitted, as explanatory of the mode in which marks, originally suited to the eye, became fitted to address the ear, the invention of letters can no longer be denied to man as one of the rarest triumphs of his intellectual powers.*

We have already referred to the Chinese language as the best guide to all our speculations on this subject, because not only is it constructed like that of ancient Egypt on imitations of sensible objects, but is at the present moment undergoing certain changes which will probably result in a scheme regularly alphabetic. It has been stated in a former page that the elementary symbols in this remarkable tongue are so strictly portraits, that a circle represents the sun, and a crescent the moon; that the full list of these signs does not greatly exceed two hundred; and that all the characters used by the most learned writer are produced from the union of two or more of the elements. Let it be sup-

sincerus: and the English Bible the term "plain." The contrast between the brothers seems to respect the cunning or skill of the one as a man of the field, addicted perhaps to plunder after the manner of those times, and the gentle manners of the other as a domestic character. Dr Lamb's exposition of the radical letters in this case may appear somewhat fanciful, but his theory, nevertheless, deserves much attention.

* "The sublime invention of an alphabet, by which the figure or representation of the idea was presented to the eye, while the sound of it reached the ear, and both by means of the one and the other conveyed with equal perspicuity to the mind, has always been considered so wonderful in its nature and so powerful in its effects, as to transcend the utmost stretch of human intellect. Yet, unless we are mistaken, the construction of the Chinese alphabet will show that its invention might have been, and probably was, the happy thought of some individual. This may be deemed a bold conclusion, when it is recollected that after every research the common conclusion has been—that the invention of an alphabet is of divine origin. But *—nec deus intersit*—why should we call in supernatural aid where the powers of the human mind seem adequate to the necessities of the case?"—*Quarterly Review*, vol. v. p. 387.

posed that, among other combinations, that of the two characters *sun* and *moon* occurred to form a third, which was meant to express the idea of *splendour* or *brilliancy*. It is possible that the signification of this new compound would, from habit, reveal itself to a Chinese on mere inspection ; if however an explanation of its meaning was thought necessary, it would easily be communicated by a periphrasis of some well known and established characters, as those two, for example, which signify *great* and *light*.

But it would be also necessary to give a name to this new compound ; and according to their system, it might take that of either of the elements, or of some other different from both. We will suppose that the inventor chose to call it *ming*, a sound of which a second person could not form the slightest conjecture, as it bears no affinity either to the name of the sun which is *je*, or to that of the moon which is *yué*. How then is he to realize his object, and to make the name of *ming* pass current throughout China, as significant of *splendour* ? To effect this, he must certainly in the first instance have required intense thought and long reflection ; or one of those lucky hits which sometimes flit across the imagination, and lead to the most important results. In either case the process was probably something of this kind. The inventor would look for some character among those already named—we will suppose among the elementary ones—the pronunciation of which approached nearest to the sound of *ming*. In casting his eye over the list, it would not escape him that the character *moo* had the same incipient sound with the new character *ming*, and that the same position and movement of the lips were required to pronounce both. *Moo*, then, signifying wood, being an established elementary character, might be selected to supply the initial sound of the new compound *ming*. In pursuing his search among the elements, the word *ching*, denoting

blue, already known and named, could not fail to strike the ear as being symphonious with *ming*. Nor would it be very difficult for such a person to conceive that if the sound of *m* (which to pronounce requires the lips to be closed), was substituted for *ch* (which could only be uttered with the lips open), or in other words, if the initial sound of *moo* was united with the final sound of *ching*, there would be produced the exact sound of the new compound *ming*. Thenceforward the initial sound of every monosyllable in the Chinese language whose pronunciation required the letter *m* would be indicated by the character *moo*, and the sound of every word ending in *ing* by the character *ching*; and these two characters *moo* and *ching*, whether in their present or a more convenient form, would become to all intents and purposes two letters of an alphabet.*

From the operation now described a series of sounds might be selected to answer every exigency. Nothing farther, indeed, was necessary for conveying the sound of any new character than writing after it, on the principle already explained, two of the selected characters whose initial and final sounds united would supply the pronunciation required—the plan actually adopted in all the Chinese dictionaries. If then, by proceeding in this manner, they have been able to determine a series of simple sounds, of a limited number and permanently fixed, by which the names of all their characters and the words of other languages can be written; if it shall be found that they have accomplished this object by means of their own imitative characters alone, and without any foreign aid, it follows that the great problem is solved, and that the discovery of an alphabet is placed beyond all doubt. The same kind of reasoning is equally applicable to the derivation of that alphabet, to

which those of the western world are indebted for their origin immediately from Egyptian hieroglyphics; and all this may have been effected by a simple and natural process, without the interposition of divine aid.

But whatever may have been the precise mode of perfecting this invention, there is no doubt that the Chinese are in possession of an alphabet constructed on the basis just delineated. It consists of thirty-six characters, the names of which supply an equal number of initial sounds, and of twelve others which furnish the same number of final sounds. This alphabetical system is explained in the introduction to the imperial dictionary by means of twelve tables. The characters representing initials are ranged across the head of the page, and those exhibiting the finals in a column down the margin; and at the angle, formed by lines drawn from any two of these, is placed a well-known character harmonizing in sound with that which is produced by the union of the initial and final characters. This arrangement will be better understood from the following diagram:—

INITIALS.

| | P-ong. | Ph-ong. | M-ing. | Ts-ing. |
|-------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| K-an. | pan. | phan. | man. | tsan. |
| K-ou. | pou. | phou. | moo. | tsou. |

Here it will be seen at once that the initial of *p-ong* united with the final of *k-an* make *pan*; *ph-ong* with *k-an*, *phan*; *m-ing* with *k-an*, *man*, and so with the others in the corresponding rows. In this way tables have been constructed, containing all the syllables which can possibly be formed from the alphabet, and which constitute in fact the whole of the spoken language of China.

The thirty-six initial sounds are distributed into nine classes or series, and when expressed by the letters of our alphabet stand as under :—

- | | | | |
|---------|-------|------|---------|
| 1. k, | kh, | k, | gn. |
| 2. t, | th, | t, | ng. |
| 3. ch, | chh, | ch, | n. |
| 4. p, | ph, | p, | m. |
| 5. f, | fh, | f, | m. |
| 6. ts, | tsh, | ts, | s, s. |
| 7. tch, | tchh, | tch, | sh, sh. |
| 8. y, | h, | y, | hh. |
| 9. l, | | y. | |

It cannot escape notice that the third letter in the several series of initials is precisely the same as the first, and that some others are repeated. The alphabetical characters in the original, however, are all different, and a distinction is therefore probably made by the Chinese in their sound; which, as it very likely amounts to a mere refinement, will reduce the real consonants to twenty-four, the number in the Sanscrit exclusive of the ten pronounced with the aspirate.

For the information now enjoyed on this interesting subject the learned throughout Europe are greatly indebted to Mr Marshman, who nearly thirty years ago published a dissertation on the characters and sounds of the Chinese language. The main principles, it is true, were known to others before this enterprising missionary favoured the world with his opinions; but they were so completely involved in mystery that the ingenious contrivances, employed to render certain of the signs phonetic, were not fully understood even by those who had devoted a large portion of their lives to oriental philology. Nay, the practice of

ascertaining the sounds of one set of characters by the division of others had fallen under their observation ; and yet the effect of this expedient on the formation of an alphabet did not present itself to their minds in its full bearing. His own views in the outset were not a little perplexed. It is difficult, he remarked, even to guess who was the author of this system, or the age in which it was invented. On first observing, the thought occurred to him that it might possibly have originated with the present dynasty, and the idea of it have been borrowed from the Tartar alphabet. But several things, he adds, rendered this improbable: the same system is found in dictionaries *long* before that which bears the name of imperial was compiled ; and indeed, on close examination, he found that the method adopted by the Tartars does not comprehend the scheme of initials. To introduce therefore a new method of pronunciation, attached to the same characters, must have been attended with greater difficulties than the introduction of a new language ; and is such an innovation as has scarcely been known in any nation, much less in China. The invention, he concludes, must therefore at present be left in obscurity, while the scheme itself exhibits a curious proof both of the vast powers and the limited nature of the human mind ; of the former in the regularity and extent of the system, and of the latter in stopping at the monosyllabic stage. How astonishing that with the idea of combining the *characters*, that of combining the *names* of these characters should never have entered the mind : an idea which seems connected with the other in the most natural and intimate manner, and which would have rendered the oral part of the language as definite and as copious as that of the characters.*

* A Dissertation on the Characters and Sounds of the Chinese Language; including Tables of the Elementary Characters, and of the Chinese Monosyllables. By J. Marshman.

The fact now mentioned must not be altogether ascribed to the want of penetration on the part of the Chinese grammarians. They admire their own system, and are unwilling to relinquish it, though obviously imperfect in some essential respects. Experience has proved that hieroglyphic monosyllables have invariably given way to alphabetical or syllabic combinations; and they are not ignorant that the adoption of the latter would infallibly destroy their gorgeous fabric, and render useless their numerous books, many of which have been preserved during twenty centuries. Their extreme veneration for all that is ancient is a feeling which, by its hostility to innovation, may have contributed not a little to the permanence of their literary notions and grammatical forms. So sacred, we are told, is this attachment even to the very characters of the language, that it is not a mere want of taste but a positive misdemeanour to tear a written paper and throw away the fragments; such scraps, wherever found, are carefully picked up, and religiously preserved by every man of letters, who considers it his duty to prevent the profanation of using them for any unworthy purpose.*

The inference arising from these remarks, as applicable to the hieroglyphs of Egypt, is too obvious to require a formal statement. As all writing was originally derived from visible representations, it may be presumed that alphabetical characters in all languages are an abridgment of those mimetic signs which were at first employed to denote sensible objects. In a field at once so wide and undetermined, there must be great room for the workings of fancy; and no one can have looked into the volumes of Van Helmont, Wachter, Nelme, or Jones, without perceiving the hazard of yielding to ingenious speculation which has not been preceded by laborious inquiry. The Egyptians passed from the use of

* Quarterly Review, vol. v. p. 399, from which some of the remarks stated above have been borrowed.

sacred sculptures to that of phonetic emblems at an era so remote, or in a manner so gradual, as to have prevented all traces of their progress from being distinctly marked ; and hence, though the relation between the two systems is obvious to every intelligent eye, the motives which led to the change and the period at which it was accomplished are now merely the subject of conjecture.*

From the striking resemblance which subsists among the ancient alphabets, there can be no doubt that they had their origin in the same source. Whether the Semitic nations conferred the gift of letters upon the inhabitants of Egypt, or received it from them, it is manifest that the Chaldeans, Syrians, Hebrews, and Arabians possessed the art of alphabetical writing nearly at the same time, and that it was afterwards conveyed through the medium of colonization or commercial intercourse to the several tribes who occupied the shores of the Archipelago. According to this view, the countrymen of Job and of Moses were equally qualified to commit the fruits of their holy inspiration to a literary record, capable of being preserved by their posterity, and of being studied not less profitably by the natives of Idumea than by those of Palestine. There is not, then, the slightest proof that any portion of the Old Testament was composed in hieroglyphics, or that the knowledge of alphabetical charac-

* The works of the authors cited in the text are as follows :

Alphabeti veri naturalis Hebraici Delineatio. 1667.

Naturæ et Scripturæ Concordia. 1752.

An Essay towards the Investigation of the Origin and Elements of Language and Letters, that is, sounds and symbols ; wherein is considered their analogy and power to express the radical ideas of which the primitive language appears to have been formed. 1772.

A Grammatical Introduction to a Universal Hieroglyphic Language. 1768.

To these may be added the labours of Olaus Rudbeck, who devoted to similar inquiries a work in four volumes folio, entitled "*Atlantica, sive Manheim vera Japheti Posterorum sedes ac Patria.*" 1696—1702. This learned writer saw in the Caduceus of Mercury the entire alphabet of the northern nations, and very ingeniously derived from it all the letters.

ters was denied to the human race till the promulgation of the Law at Mount Sinai, when a miracle is supposed to have been performed merely to supply the defects of human invention.

It has been thought by some that the first alphabet was Ethiopic, founded on hieroglyphics, and afterwards modelled into less laborious figures for the sake of expedition in writing. Fourmont was so much of this opinion that he saw in the three first characters the remains of hieroglyphs, *beta* being evidently the gate of a temple. Bruce, after remarking that others are for giving to letters a divine original, and insist that they were made known to Abraham by Jehovah himself, observes, that it appears from Scripture there were two sorts of them already well known to Moses when the Almighty spake to him on Mount Sinai. “The first two tables, we are told, were written by the finger of God, in what character is not said, but as Moses received them to read to the people, so he surely understood them. But after he had broken these two tables, and had another meeting with God on the mount on the subject of the Law, God directs him specially not to write in the Egyptian character of hieroglyphics, but in the current hand used by the Ethiopian merchant, like the letters on a signet: That is, he should not write by a picture representing the thing, for this the law forbids, and the bad consequences of it were evident; but he should write the Law in the current hand, by characters representing sounds (though nothing else in heaven or on earth), or by the letters which the Ishmaelites, Cushites, and other trading nations had long used in business for signing their engagements: and this was the meaning of being like the letters of a signet.*

* Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, vol. ii. p. 345. Engraving upon gems and stones, used as seals, is, as Dr Murray observes, well known to be a very ancient and curious art. It is older than the days of Abraham,

Hence it is inferred that the knowledge of letters was not on this occasion communicated to Moses, because he understood both sets of characters—hieroglyphs and alphabetical signs—before the promulgation of the law; having learned them in Egypt and during his long stay among the Cushite shepherds in Arabia Petræa. On the same grounds it has been concluded that the Egyptian character was now held profane and forbidden to the Hebrews, who might thereby have been led into the grossest idolatry. They were no longer allowed to represent Judah by a lion, Zebulon by a ship, nor Issachar by an ass crouching between two burdens. In truth, the second commandment itself embodies the prohibition, and applies not only to graven images but also to the likeness of any thing in the firmament or on the face of the earth. It is manifest, indeed, from the Mosaical record, viewed in connection with the relics which still remain of the ancient worship, that representations of the sun and moon, the ox, the sheep, and several birds and fishes, were adored in Misraim; and that there was among the chosen people themselves a strong propensity to fall down before the same symbols as objects of veneration. From these considerations arose the interdictory statutes of the Jewish lawgiver as applicable to the forms of written language. Hieroglyphs were from that time discontinued, and a different mode of communication extended throughout all the tribes of Israel.

For many ages after the invention of letters, we know of

and seems to have been much practised in Egypt. It is remarkable that the Coptic language uses the same name for the character that is given to Moses: *phatah* in the Hebrew being constantly applied to seal-engraving, and to writing in the Egyptian translation. Perhaps some of the genuinest and earliest forms of the alphabet, and coeval with the highest antiquity, may still exist. The names of the twelve tribes were engraved on twelve tablets in the Urim and Thummim, a symbol borrowed from the Egyptians. The president of the Judges of Heliopolis wore a similar ornament. — vol. ii. p. 346.

no language to which they were applied but the dialects of that general tongue which appears to have been spoken by the descendants of Noah. These were the Hebrew, Phœnician, Chaldee, Samaritan, Syriac, and Arabic, all nearly allied, and of the same race. In fact, the alphabet in its earliest form affords proof that it was invented for some of these. The vowels are very remarkable elements of words; but he who first analyzed articulate speech into its component parts may be supposed to have operated either upon the Phœnician or the Hebrew. He seems to have discovered from the peculiar nature of the radicals, that the vowels might be suppressed; that the consonants would sufficiently point out the omission to a practised reader; and accordingly in this manner all those dialects have ever been written.

The first foreign language to which the Phœnician alphabet was applied appears to have been the Greek. The history of Cadmus is generally known; but the change which was effected in the order and form of his alphabet has excited little attention. The Greek is so full of vowels that, were consonants only expressed, it would be altogether unintelligible to the reader. As the Phœnician names of the letters were imported with the characters themselves, it occurred to the first writers of Greek that certain of the alphabetical marks, not absolutely requisite in their original sound, might serve to denote the first vowel in their name. *Alpha* and *Iota* lost the very slender aspiration which they originally had in the Phœnician language, to supply the place of *A* and *I*. The letter *He* dropped its guttural sound for the short *E* found in its name. *Heth*, the strong and rather harsh aspiration of the Hebrews, long retained its power as *H*, the *spiritus asper* of the Greeks; at last, however, this character was applied to mark $\eta\tau\alpha$ or *e* long. Characters for the remaining vowels were found by the same process; and

from this new form of the alphabet descended all the European varieties. When Grecian literature became known to the Syrians and other nations of the East, the deficient state of their ancient orthography could no longer be concealed; and they accordingly endeavoured to correct it by writing the *Greek vowels* in a smaller hand, above or below the consonants of their own alphabet. This ingenious method of denoting vocal sounds became the parent of the Masoretic, Syriac, and Arabic pointing.*

It is not improbable that the peculiarity now mentioned arose from the circumstance that letters in their first stage from ideagraphic signs had a syllabic power; the vowel being so closely associated with the consonant as to constitute a simple enunciation. But as these inquiries would lead into a field much too extensive for the limited object we have in view, we now take leave of them to resume the history of the Israelites after their separation into two kingdoms.†

* Bruce, vol. ii. p. 349. Murray's Notes.

† On the interesting inquiries which respect the language of China and Egypt, the reader will find much valuable information in Du Halde's *General Account of China*; the *Mémoires concernant les Chinois*. Grosier's *Description de la Chine: Lettre sur les Caractères Chinois: Lettre de P'kin sur le Génie de la Langue Chinoise*. Marshman's *Dissertation on the Characters and Sounds of the Chinese Language*; Morrison's *Chinese Grammar and Dictionary*; Abel Rémusat's *Grammaire Chinoise*; Count de Gebelin's *Monde Primitif*, tome iii.; Young's *Recent Discoveries in Hieroglyphic Literature*; *Phonetic System of Hieroglyphics*, by Henry Salt, Esq.; *Précis du Système Hieroglyphique des Anciens Egyptiens*, &c. Par M. Champollion le Jeune, seconde édition; Klaproth's *Examen Critique; Lectures on Hieroglyphics* by the Marquis Spineto; Adelung's "Mithridates," or General History of Languages; and some able articles in the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews.

CHAPTER VI.

HISTORY OF THE JEWS AS CONNECTED WITH THAT
OF THE EGYPTIANS AND ASSYRIANS, FROM THE
ACCESSION OF REHOBAM TO THE DECLENSION OF
THE KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH IN THE
REIGN OF AHAZ.

THE divisions which, upon the death of Solomon, assailed the commonwealth of the Hebrews were directed by that peculiar law of Divine Providence which, under the theocratic government peculiar to the descendants of Abraham, made the children suffer for the sins of their parents. The irregularities that disgraced the closing period of the late king's life had drawn from the voice of Heaven a severe denunciation against the royal house; and, accordingly, his corpse was hardly committed to the burying-place of his fathers when his successor was compelled to endure the heavy penalty which the anger of Jehovah had threatened to inflict upon all who served other gods.

The return of Jeroboam from Egypt was the signal of revolt, and the indiscreet answer returned to his people by the young monarch completed the schism between Israel and Judah. It must, at the same time, be manifest to

every reader of their ancient history that the dissensions which now broke out among the tribes had an origin much more remote. Jealousies, which were only partially suppressed during the brilliant reigns of David and his son, had disturbed the government of the republic even when the Judges ruled. Ephraim, the most numerous, and in some respects the most powerful, envied the distinction conferred upon Judah, as the metropolitan tribe and the depositary of the divine promises; whilst the latter, incensed at the groundless suspicions and hostile attitude of the sons of Joseph, did not fail to retaliate as often as an occasion presented itself. The rebellion of Absalom, for example, arose from the dislike which the northern section of the kingdom entertained towards the more favoured families of the south, who, connected with the sovereign by blood, were supposed to enjoy a larger share of his countenance.

But there cannot be any doubt that the disorders of Solomon's administration, and more especially his defection from the national worship, prepared the minds of his subjects for the revolt which stripped Rehoboam of the greater part of his hereditary dominions. Of the twelve tribes ten professed their adhesion to his rival, who had long cherished the design of raising his hand against the unpopular prince whom the partiality of his father was known to have destined for the throne. Had Jeroboam obtained possession of the capital and the sacred emblems of the Divine Presence, he would, it is probable, have had little difficulty in drawing to his standard the whole of the Hebrew nation. He could not, however, overcome the fidelity of Judah and Benjamin, whom the feelings of kindred and the influence of a more powerful principle bound firmly to the interests of the house of David. In this attachment to their lawful sovereign these faithful clans were joined by nearly all the posterity of Levi. Consecrated to the service of the temple, they

would not allow any inferior motive to withdraw them from a duty so important. A great number of families, too, from the other tribes repaired to the vicinity of Jerusalem, influenced by a similar regard for the religion of their ancestors; on which account the kingdom of Judah, though it occupied a territory comparatively small, soon equalled in population the more extensive dominions of Israel.

The following table exhibits the list of monarchs who sat on the two thrones, from the revolt of the Ten Tribes to the conquest of Samaria :—

| KINGS OF JUDAH. | | | KINGS OF ISRAEL. | | |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|--------|-------|
| | YEARS. | B. C. | | YEARS. | B. C. |
| 1. Rehoboam reigned | 17 | 990 | 1. Jeroboam reigned | 22 | 990 |
| 2. Abijah | 3 | 973 | 2. Nadab | 2 | 968 |
| 3. Asa | 41 | 970 | 3. Baasha | 23 | 966 |
| | | | 4. Ela | 1 | 943 |
| | | | 5. Zimri and Omri | 11 | 942 |
| 4. Jehoshaphat | 25 | 929 | 6. Ahab | 22 | 931 |
| 5. Jehoram or Joram | 8 | 904 | 7. Ahaziah | 2 | 909 |
| 6. Ahaziah | 1 | 896 | 8. Jehoram or Joram | 12 | 907 |
| 7. Queen Athaliah | 6 | 895 | 9. Jehu. | 26 | 895 |
| 8. Joash or Jehoash | 40 | 889 | 10. Jehoahaz | 17 | 867 |
| 9. Amaziah | 29 | 849 | 11. Jehoash or Joash | 16 | 850 |
| Interregnum | 11 | 820 | 12. Jeroboam II. | 41 | 834 |
| 10. Uzziel or Azariah | 52 | 809 | 1st Interregnum | 22 | 793 |
| | | | 13. Zechariah and Shal- | | |
| | | | lam | 1 | 771 |
| | | | 14. Menahem | 10 | 770 |
| | | | 15. Pekahiah | 2 | 760 |
| 11. Jotham | 16 | 757 | 16. Pekah | 20 | 758 |
| 12. Ahaz | 16 | 741 | 2d Interregnum | 10 | 738 |
| 13. Hezekiah | 29 | 725 | 17. Hoshea | 9 | 728 |
| | | | Samaria taken | 271 | 719 |

Owing to some inaccuracies in the chronology of this period it has been found extremely difficult to harmonize the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah. There has

occurred some discrepancy between the years of their respective reigns and the full period they occupied the throne; a source of confusion which has been not a little increased by the want of attention or of skill in determining the duration of the two vacancies in the succession of the former race of monarchs, so as to make them correspond with that of the latter throughout the whole series. In the foregoing scheme, the chronological principles assumed are these: 1. The standard of the reigns ascribed in the sacred Scriptures to the kings of Judah are considered correct; being verified at once by the statements of the Book of Chronicles, and by the testimonies of Josephus, Abulfaragius and Eutychius. 2. The two series of reigns are found to agree in three different points of time; namely, the administrations of Rehoboam and Jeroboam began together, or at least in the same year; next, the reigns of Queen Athaliah and of Jehu are found to coincide, the latter having slain the kings of Israel and of Judah on the same day; and, thirdly, Samaria was taken by the Assyrians in the ninth year of Hoshea, which was the sixth year of Hezekiah. Hence it necessarily follows that the first six reigns in Judah must be equal to the first eight in Israel; and that the next seven in Judah, down to the sixth year of Hezekiah, must be equal to the remainder of the reigns in Israel, including the two vacancies or interregnums. But, upon comparing the former together, it appears that the first six of Judah amount to ninety-five years; whereas, according to the table of reigns given in the Scripture, the first eight of Israel amount to ninety-eight. Consequently, there is an excess of three years, which, in order to render the two lists strictly harmonious, must be retrenched from the Israelitish reigns.

The amendment now suggested is easily accomplished by deducting a year from the respective governments of Baasha,

Ela, and Zimri, to all of whom a few months at the time of their accession are counted for whole years. A curious and satisfactory confirmation of this adjustment as applicable to the kings of Israel is furnished by the historian Josephus, who reckons the sum of their reigns, from the separation of the Ten Tribes down to the reduction of Samaria, as extending to 240 years. Now, if from the amount in the corrected form given above we deduct 32 years for the two interregnums, the remainder, 239 years complete, or 240 including the current year, will correspond exactly to the length of the united reigns.

On the grounds thus established, we are able to detect some errors that have crept into the correspondencies of reigns, and which have hitherto proved a stumbling-block to those chronologers who had not an opportunity of distinguishing the spurious numbers from the true.

For instance, in 1 Kings xxii. 41, it is said, "Jehoshaphat began to reign over Judah in the *fourth* year of Ahab."—It ought to be the *second*.

In the twenty-second chapter, 51st verse, it is recorded that "Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the *seventeenth* year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah."—It should be the *twentieth* of Jehoshaphat.

In the Second Book of the Kings, i. 17, it is said that Jehoram the son of Ahaziah began to reign over Israel in the *second* year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat. The proper date is the *twenty-second* year of Jehoshaphat. The same correction applies to Second Kings iii. 1, where is also an error of a similar nature.

It is stated in Second Kings viii. 16, that Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign over Judah in the fifth year of the reign of Joram the son of Ahab. The right reading is the *fifth* year from the death of Ahab; or the *third* year of Joram's reign.

“Jehoash began to reign over Israel,” says the Scripture, 2 Kings xiii. 10, “in the *thirty-seventh* year of Joash king of Judah.” It ought to be the *thirty-ninth* year, as it is given in the best editions of the Greek Septuagint.

In Second Kings xv. 30, it is written that “Hoshea slew Pekah king of Israel, in the *twentieth* year of Jotham.” But Jotham reigned only sixteen years; and the true period will be found to coincide with the *third* year of Ahaz, as may be found from the succeeding chapter of the same book.*

Rehoboam did not without emotion see his kingdom torn from him, and so large a proportion of his subjects place themselves under the sceptre of a rebellious usurper. The first impulse of disappointment and rage carried him to the resolution of making war upon the son of Nebat; and with this view he summoned a council of the princes of Judah to attend him in his capital. His views being seconded by the military chiefs, he raised in the two tribes which still acknowledged his authority a host of 180,000 chosen men to fight against the house of Israel, and to recover the full sovereignty of all the Hebrews for the house of his father. But the prophet Shemaiah, moved by the Divine Spirit, dissuaded him from this attempt to seek his right by the shedding of blood; recommending that he should in the mean time act simply on the defensive, fortify his towns, repair his strongholds, and provide warlike supplies wherever he might be threatened with an attack.

Jeroboam, apparently satisfied with his acquisitions, directed all his attention to their security and permanence. Aware that the main support of political greatness is derived from religious sentiment, he laboured to give a national form to the superstition which he had recommended, and to invest with a divine sanction the idolatrous usages borrowed by

* Hales, vol. ii. p. 373.

him from the most corrupt era of the Jewish history. Regardless of the holy tribe and the sacerdotal family, he chose priests from the people at large ; assuming in his own person a spiritual authority not conceded to a civil ruler either by the laws of Moses or the institutions of the Aaronic priesthood.

The Feast of Tabernacles, according to the established ritual, fell on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ; but the king of Israel, for reasons which cannot now be distinctly ascertained, removed the wonted celebration to the fifteenth day of the eighth month. Some authors suppose that, as this annual festival was instituted by the Almighty to give his people an opportunity of expressing their gratitude for the fruits of the earth, the difference might arise from the climate of Shechem being less genial than that of Jerusalem, and the harvest in a corresponding degree later. Others imagine that Jeroboam was influenced by the expectation that many of the inhabitants of Judah, after enjoying the festivity in the neighbourhood of their own holy city, would repair to his metropolis, in order to renew their jollity among their former friends. But it is more probable that in all these proceedings he acted from a principle of opposition to the national religion, and with the view of alienating the minds of his subjects from the sacred walls whither their fathers had long gone to worship at the appointed seasons.

Whatever his motives might be, the king resolved to celebrate the feast at Bethel, and to discharge with his own hands the duties of high-priest. But while he stood beside the altar, a certain prophet who came from Judah announced to him that the edifice, on which he was about to perform his idolatrous rites, should one day be polluted and thrown down by a prince descended from the house of David, Josias by name ; and as a proof that this prediction would in due time attain its full accomplishment, he added that the altar should be

instantly rent in pieces, and the sacrifices with which it was loaded be scattered on the ground. Enraged at this interruption, Jeroboam stretched forth his hand to seize him, but the wrath of God defeated the attempt by smiting the king with a sudden disease. The arm which he had extended against the holy seer was deprived of its strength and motion. He felt that he had given offence to Jehovah, and therefore entreated the stranger to pray for him, that the sudden calamity might be withdrawn,—a request which the compassion of the divine messenger would not permit him to refuse. “And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king’s hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.”

This incident has afforded to Josephus an opportunity of introducing into his narrative some of those traditions respecting the rise of the new kingdom of Israel which had been transmitted through the mouths of ancestry down to his own time. He not only gives the name of the prophet who carried the message to Jeroboam, but also explains the motives of the other who dwelt at Bethel, and who, by the most daring falsehoods, succeeded in inducing the visiter to violate certain injunctions respecting the abstinence it behoved him to practise while in the enemy’s country, as well as with regard to the manner of his return home. The historian relates that the king was greatly moved by the awful prediction sounded in his ears, more especially as it was accompanied with such an alarming appeal to his own feelings, and was therefore, it might be presumed, little inclined to prosecute his schismatical intentions as the founder of a rival communion. The “old prophet,” whose counsel, it is supposed, had encouraged the sovereign in his innovations, could not fail to be disturbed when he heard of the striking occurrence which still filled with alarm and distrust the inhabitants of Bethel. Should Jeroboam desist

from his undertaking and allow his people to frequent the temple at Jerusalem, the calves at either extremity of the kingdom would be abhorred ; Shechem would be divested of its rising authority ; and the sceptre of David would again be recognised as the only emblem of legitimate power from Dan to Beersheba.

To avert these evils, which threatened the new establishment at Bethel, the aged seer resolved to have an interview with the bearer of the unwelcome tidings from the land of Judah. He found him sitting under an oak, and invited him to return that he might share his hospitality after so much painful travel and fasting ; overcoming his objections by an earnest assurance that he himself was a prophet, worshipped the same God as the Hebrews of Judah, and was moreover commanded by an angel to bring him back to his house that he might eat bread and drink water. The stratagem, it need not be added, was attended with all the success which the false friend desired ; and the punishment denounced against his victim was literally inflicted.

This catastrophe, as it was meant to shake the confidence of Jeroboam in the veracity of the prophet, is said to have been urged upon him by his partisans with the greatest effect. “ Wherefore is it that thou art disturbed at the words of that silly fellow ? ” The paralysis which had seized the royal hand was ascribed to the labour he had undergone in lifting the huge bodies of the animals used in the sacrifice ; and as to the falling of the altar, might it not be occasioned by the undue weight laid upon it on an occasion so solemn in itself, and so interesting to all the tribes of Israel ? Besides, the king was reminded that the presumptuous man who was so ready to warn others could not foresee the destiny which awaited himself, nor avoid the fate which lay in his own path. He had been met by a lion, the instrument of divine vengeance, and been torn to pieces,—a proof that he had

not the authority which he assigned for his prediction, and enjoyed not the countenance of Heaven in his spiteful auguries against the flourishing commonwealth of Israel.

But why should the “old prophet,” who had by his falsehood deprived a brother of life and reputation, express a desire to be buried in the same grave? It was, we are told, because he knew that the prophecy against the altar at Bethel would one day be fulfilled, and that his own memory would thereby be exposed to execration as an ignorant or dishonest expounder of God’s will. Apprehensive that his bones might be taken from the grave and burnt, he desired his sons to lay his body in the same sepulchre to which they had committed the corpse of the prophet who came from Jerusalem; trusting that the respect which would be shown to the dust of a good man would protect the mortal remains of one less pious and upright.*

The prophecy now mentioned is one of the most remarkable recorded in this portion of the Sacred Volume; for it bears reference to an action which came exactly to pass above three hundred and forty years afterwards. It moreover describes the circumstances of the action, and specifies the very name of the person who was to perform it; and, therefore, every Jew who lived in the time of its accomplishment must have been convinced of the divine authority of a religion resting upon so sure a basis, since, as none but God could foresee, consequently none but he could foretell, events at such a distance.†

There is at all times combined with superstition a deep feeling of credulity and fanaticism; and of this we have a striking instance in the case of Jeroboam. His eldest son, a prince of great promise, was seized with an alarming sick-

* Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. viii. c. 9.

† See the Commentaries of Le Clerc and Calnet on the place.

ness ; whereupon the anxious father prevailed upon his queen to disguise herself in the dress of a private person and repair to Shiloh, where the prophet Ahijah had his abode, and to inquire concerning the fate of their child. The eyes of the old man being dim through length of years, she hoped to have the more readily escaped detection ; but he possessed an inward light which discovered to him all the intentions of the apostate king, and the deception which he now meant to practise on him through the instrumentality of his wife. Ahijah, notwithstanding, invited her to enter, and after stating that her coming was revealed to him by his Divine Master, he placed before her affrighted imagination a series of future events, involving the destiny of her son, her posterity, and of the whole kingdom of Israel. But the words of Scripture are more impressive than any other which could be employed. “ When Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam ; why feignest thou thyself to be another ? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.” The fatal intelligence which he then communicated extended to the utter extirpation of her husband’s race, who were doomed to untimely deaths both in the city and in the field, “ for the mouth of the Lord had spoken it. Arise thou therefore,” he concluded, “ get thee to thine own house ; and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him ; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel.”*

The king of Judah, as has been already noticed, began his reign by increasing the strength and number of his fenced cities, and by training his subjects to the habits of

war. Aware that his enemy had enjoyed the approbation of Shishak in his insidious endeavours to overthrow the house of David, he could not be surprised to hear that the Egyptians themselves meditated an attack upon his borders. His preparations, though unequal to the occasion, were conducted with considerable skill and ardour; but he had meanwhile rendered himself obnoxious to the divine displeasure by imitating the idolatrous usages of the heathen, "setting up images and groves upon every hill, and under every green tree." In the fifth year of his reign, accordingly, he received notice that the armies of Egypt were on their march against him. The compiler of the Second Book of Chronicles relates that Shishak came "with twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen; and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians. And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah and came to Jerusalem."*

Unable to meet the invader in the field, Rehoboam listened to the voice of the prophet Shemaiah, who, in the name of heaven, recommended submission. The conqueror, whose thoughts seem to have been fixed on plunder much more intensely than on ambition or revenge, entered the sacred capital of Judea, stripped the palace of its most splendid furniture, and the temple of the vast treasure which had been accumulated there by David and Solomon. He likewise carried away the golden shields which the latter of these monarchs had fabricated for his guards; in place of which, it is mentioned by the inspired writer with particular emphasis that Rehoboam was content to substitute others composed of brass.†

* 2 Chronicles xii. 3—12.

† "It may seem something strange," says Bishop Patrick, "that Shishak, who was so nearly allied to Rehoboam, should come up against him

Allusion has already been made to the confusion introduced into the Egyptian chronology of this period by Sir Isaac Newton, who insisted upon identifying Sesostris with Sesac, or more properly Shishak according to the Hebrew orthography. The illustrious astronomer maintained at the same time that this was no new opinion, for that it had been defended by Josephus when he condemns Herodotus for ascribing the actions of Sesac to Sesostris, and that the error was only in the name of the king: "For this is as much as to say that the true name of him who did those things described by Herodotus was Sesac, and that Herodotus erred only in calling him Sesostris, or that he was called Sesostris by a corruption of his name." "Our great chronologer," Sir John Marsham, he adds, "was also of opinion that Sesostris was Sesac." And if this be granted, then it is most certain that Sesostris came out of Egypt, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, to invade the nations, and returned back into Egypt in the fourteenth year of that king.*

But upon a careful examination of this subject it will be found that Herodotus does not confound Sesac with Sesostris. Beginning at Menes, who ascended the throne about 2400 years before the Christian epoch, he gives a list of ten kings prior to the time when Jerusalem was sacked by an Egyptian conqueror; and the Pharaoh who then ruled over the provinces of the Nile bears in his catalogue the name of Cephrenus. The appellation used in Scripture is not to be found in any chronological work quoted either by the native

and take his royal city. But Rehoboam, we must remember, was not the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and therefore no relation to Shishak. But even had he been ever so nearly related, as kingdoms, we know, never marry, so it is likely that Jeroboam, who had lived long in Egypt, stirred him up to invade his rival, that thereby he might establish himself in his new kingdom. And for this reason it was that when the armies of Egypt had taken the fenced cities of Judah they returned without giving Jeroboam or his dominions any the least disturbance."—Commentary on the place.

* Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended, p. 70.

writers Manetho and Eratosthenes, or by the Greeks, Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus. The term, too, employed in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, Shishak or Shusak, appears to be one of ridicule or contempt—descriptive, it is thought, of the licentious habits in which the Egyptian sovereign is supposed to have indulged.

In truth, Newton set no limits to his emendation of Egyptian dates, having determined to reduce them all to his scheme, which was regulated by what he called the course of nature in the exact length of reigns and generations, and also by a due regard to the precession of the equinoxes and the achronical risings of the stars. In pursuance of this method, which had an undue reliance on astronomy, he disregarded all the dynasties in Egypt Upper or Lower prior to the days of Joshua, though sacred history testifies that it was a considerable kingdom in the time of Abraham, and was among the first which rose into eminence after the Deluge. He also leaves a wide chasm between the successor of Moses and the administration of Rehoboam: this is, according to his hypothesis, from the expulsion of the Shepherds to the commencement of Sesac's administration.*

It cannot be denied, however, that there is some foundation for the opinion entertained by Newton relative to the conclusion of Josephus on which he supports his peculiar views. In the tenth chapter of his eighth book, the Jewish antiquary remarks, with reference to the invasion of Shishak, that "Herodotus of Halicarnassus mentions this expedition, having only mistaken the king's name; and in saying that he made war upon many other nations also, brought Syria of Palestine into subjection, and took the male inhabitants prisoners without fighting. It is manifest that he intended to declare that our nation was subdued by him; for

* Hales, vol. i. p. 256.

he says that he left behind him pillars in the land of those who delivered up themselves to him without resistance. Now our king Rehoboam delivered up our city without risking a battle."

At first sight it seems not to admit of any doubt that Josephus confounds the inroad of Shishak with the celebrated adventures of Scsostris, who, as we have elsewhere observed, passed the Red sea, entered Asia near the Persian gulf, advanced into the northern parts of that vast continent, turned westward into Thrace, and finally returned home by the shores of Syria and the Arabian desert. But whatever might be the conclusions of the Jewish historian, it is certain that Herodotus did not identify the great Egyptian conqueror with the obscure prince who plundered Jerusalem and carried away the golden shields with which the magnificent Solomon had decorated his guards.

Rehoboam, after sitting on the throne of Judah seventeen years, was succeeded by his son Abijah, who instantly resolved to make war on Israel, with the view of recovering the dominions his father had lost. Having raised an army of 400,000 men, he proceeded to Mount Ephraim, where he was met by Jeroboam at the head of 800,000. The young king is said to have pronounced a speech in the hearing of the two hosts, upbraiding his enemies with their defection from the true religion, and threatening them with the heaviest judgments of God. But, while he was thus employed, his more skilful antagonist marched part of his troops round the hill, and had nearly deprived him of the power either to fight or to retreat before any danger was apprehended. The men of Judah, however, did not give way to panic nor allow confusion to disorder their bands. Having implored the assistance of Heaven they advanced with loud shouting and the sound of the holy trumpets to the combat; which after an unprecedented slaughter, terminated in a complete vic-

tory. Five hundred thousand of the Israelites were left dead on the field; and Jeroboam had to endure the additional mortification of seeing the most important of his towns reduced, and his country wasted by the conquerors, whose inexperience in the art of war he had taught his people to despise. He did not long survive this disaster, which, in his eyes could not but appear as a divine retribution, though he outlived Abijah, whose reign was limited to the short period of three years.*

The character of the latter prince, though his arms were crowned with success when employed against the idolaters of Bethel, is not free from some dark stains. It is said of him by the sacred historian, "that he walked in all the sins of his father; nor was his heart perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of his great-grandfather David." The shortness of his life, too, has been ascribed to the neglect or indifference which he showed towards the true faith after his triumph at Mount Ephraim; for, although he found himself in possession of the chief town where the offensive worship of the calves was practised, he neither destroyed the idol nor carried it away.†

Asa his son, who assumed the government in the twentieth year of Jeroboam, is extolled in the Bible for his piety and prudence. He made the encouragement of the

* 1 Kings xv. 1—8. 2 Chronicles xiii. 1—17. In the former book the king is called Abijam, in the latter Abijah. The speech pronounced previously to the battle is recorded only in the Chronicles; and it will be found to correspond in substance with that given by Josephus.

† The suggestion mentioned in the text, though countenanced by Stackhouse, appears not to rest on any good foundation. It ought to be remembered that the worship established by Jeroboam was not condemned so much on its own account, as because it was conducted by unhallowed hands. "Have you not," said Abijah, "cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? But as for us, Jehovah is our God, and we have not forsaken him; and the priests who minister unto the Lord are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business."

national religion the principal object of his policy ; raising it to its former influence and splendour ; and giving security to all those who repaired from the neighbouring kingdom to attend the great feasts at Jerusalem. He had a more delicate duty to perform in restraining the foul superstitions of his grandmother, who appears to have been much addicted to the manners of the native Gentiles, whose worship afforded a pretext for all kinds of iniquity. “ He removed her,” says the Scripture, “ from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove. And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated unto the house of the Lord : silver, gold, and vessels.”

But his zeal could not accomplish the entire removal of pagan orgies, though the compiler of the Chronicles, in apparent opposition to the Book of Kings, remarks, that “ Asa took away the altars of the strange gods and the high places.” To reconcile this seeming discrepancy, it may be observed that there were two kinds of high places, the one tolerated for religious purposes, the other devoted to abominations from their first institution ; the first frequented by devout worshippers, the last used as the resort of the most flagitious idolaters. These were the altars and high places which the pious prince demolished ; but those where Jehovah alone was venerated had existed so long, and were regarded by the people with so much respect, that he could not venture to abolish them. Such high places, in short, were originally consecrated in the imaginations of the Hebrews by the apparition of angels or some other miraculous event ; they had either been the abode of the ark of God, or the retreat of an ancient patriarch who had been accustomed to pray there at the rising of the sun, or at the hour when his last rays gilded the chosen eminence ; and for these reasons they were esteemed holy ground, devoted to

the Divine service, and therefore worthy of being protected from hasty innovation. This prejudice in favour of the high hill and the green tree was not finally overcome till Hezekiah, alarmed by the calamities with which his country was threatened, braved the resentment of his superstitious subjects in order to accomplish a thorough reformation.*

Ten years of peace enabled Asa to strengthen his army and fortify his cities, and thereby to be in some measure prepared for an attack which was made upon his land by Zerah the Ethiopian. This epithet, owing to the ambiguity of a descriptive term, does not distinguish the country whence the invader came; for the dark complexion which is here used as the characteristic of the warrior might apply equally to the negro, the Abyssinian, and the Arab. Some writers hold the opinion that though the leader was of Ethiopian extraction, the troops belonged to the king of Egypt, who of all the monarchs near the shores of the Red sea was the only one who could raise an army amounting to a million of soldiers and three hundred chariots. To oppose this mighty host, Asa summoned three hundred thousand men out of Judah who bore targets and spears; and out of Benjamin two hundred and eighty thousand that bore shields and drew bows; but his main reliance, notwithstanding, was upon that God who can help with many or with few. A battle was fought in the valley of Zephathah, near the town of Marshah, in which the Hebrews gained an easy though a complete victory; for their enemies being seized with sudden terror at the beginning of the action, turned their backs and betook themselves to a rapid flight, leaving an immense booty to the conquerors.

On his return from pursuing the foe, Asa was met by the prophet Azariah, who, after reminding his sovereign that

* Bishop Patrick on 1 Kings xv. 14; and Calmet on chapter xiv. 23.

the great success now obtained was from the hand of God, exhorted him to persevere in his pious resolutions, and complete the reformation he had so auspiciously begun ; assuring him that if he complied with this advice his reign would continue to be prosperous ; whereas, if he relaxed in his endeavours, a time would come when the voice of prophecy should not be heard in all the land of Judah, when the priest should receive no true answer from the Oracle, and when the whole nation should be scattered over the face of the earth, fugitive and vagabond. Warned by the man of God, the obedient king resumed his labours with the view of purifying the church, and removing all corruptions from the worship of Jehovah. He destroyed all the idols that were to be found, not only in Judah and Benjamin, but in all the conquered districts contiguous to his dominions ; he repaired the altar of burnt-offerings ; and invited strangers as well as natives to join in the adorations of the temple. This summons, we are informed by the inspired chronicler, was obeyed by many belonging to the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon ; “ for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance when they saw that the Lord his God was with him.” On a solemn festival which he had appointed, he ordered seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep, part of the spoil which he had taken from the Ethiopians, to be sacrificed ; and at the same time engaged in a covenant with his subjects, confirmed by an oath, that whoever should forsake the true worship of Jehovah should be certainly put to death.*

The holy Scripture leaves us in darkness with regard as well to the cause of the war between Zerah and Asa, as to the region of which the former was sovereign. In the

* 2 Chronicles xv. 14. “ And they sware unto the Lord with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets ; and all Judah rejoiced at the oath.”

original his country is called Cush ; a term which in the Old Testament is applied indiscriminately to a district on the eastern shore of the Red sea, and to some extensive provinces on the river Nile southward from Egypt. Cush, according to the genealogy of Noah's family, was the son of Ham ; but the Abyssinians recognise as their ancestor another Cush, a degree farther removed from the great patriarch, who had a son named Hahesh, to whose lot it fell to lead a colony of mixt people into the lands which they have since continued to possess. But, though the country now described is often denominated Ethiopia in the prophetic and historical books of the Bible, it is not considered probable that it could be the kingdom of Zerah ; because we can hardly imagine how a million of men should be permitted to march through Egypt on their way to attack Judea, or even that they should attempt an expedition so extremely perilous without the concurrence of the Egyptian monarch, to which no allusion is any where made.

It has therefore appeared to several writers as less inconsistent with the circumstances of the case, physical as well as political, that the Cush whence Zerah marched his armed multitude must be the territory in Stony Arabia to which the same appellation is not uncommonly applied. On this supposition, indeed, a difficulty arises respecting the means which any chieftain in the desert could possess to bring together a million of men and three hundred chariots. Josephus, according to one reading of his text, reduces the amount to 90,000 foot, and 100,000 cavalry ; but still the numbers seem greatly beyond the power of a nomade prince to collect or to maintain. Bruce, the celebrated traveller, who holds that Ethiopia in this chapter must mean some part of Arabia, sees no objection in the immense force which the invader led into Judea. "The translator of the Chronicles," says he, "calls Zerah an Ethiopian, which should either mean he

dwelt in Arabia, as he really did, and this gave him no advantage, or else that he was a stranger who originally came from the country above Egypt; and either way it would have been impossible during his whole lifetime to have collected a million of men, one of the greatest armies that ever stood on the face of the earth, nor could he have fed them, though they had eaten all the trees that grew in his country, nor could he have given every hundredth man one drink of water in a day from all the wells he had in his native land. But had it been translated that Zerah was a black-moor, a Cushite-negro, and prince of the Cushites that were carriers on the Isthmus, or Ethiopian shepherd, then the wonder would have ceased. Twenty camels employed to carry couriers upon them might have procured that number of men to meet in a short space of time; and as Zerah was the aggressor, he had time to choose when he should attack his enemy. Every one of these shepherds carrying with him his provision of flour and water, as is their invariable custom, might have fought with Asa at Gerar, without eating a loaf of Zerah's bread, or drinking a pint of his water."*

* Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, vol. ii. p. 332. It may not be unseasonable to observe, when weighing authorities, that Dr Hales believes Zerah to have been king of the *African Ethiopia*, and that his immense army consisted of Abyssinians and Libyans, called in the Scripture Lubim. — *New Analysis*, vol. ii. p. 330.

There is an amazing discrepancy in the numbers, as given by different writers, of the troops which the Ethiopian led into the field. In the Book of Chronicles we have a thousand thousands and three hundred chariots; in Josephus, according to one reading, 90,000 foot, 100,000 horse, and 300 chariots; and in Whiston's translation it is nine hundred thousand footmen, and one hundred thousand horsemen, and three hundred chariots.

In the original the words are ἐνενήκοντα μὲν πεζῶν, μυριάσιν ἵππων δὲ δέκα, τροχαίοις δὲ ἑκατασί. The Latin translation is "Peditum quidem nonginta millia, equitum vero centum millia, adjunctis trecentis curribus." Now ninety myriads are certainly 900,000, and ten myriads are 100,000; amounting, in fact, to the thousand thousands of the Scriptures. Mr Milman (*History of the Jews*, vol. i. p. 277), reads "a million of men, and 300,000 chariots. Hales, (vol. ii. p. 330), remarks, that "Josephus with greater probability reduces the number to 90,000 infantry and 100,000 cavalry."

While, owing to the vigilance and piety of her king, the land of Judah enjoyed peace and reputation, the people of Israel were exposed to great loss and suffering. The curse pronounced by the prophet was not allowed to fall to the ground. When Jeroboam paid the debt of nature, his son Nadab mounted the vacant throne; an event which took place either in the second or third year of Asa: But as he resembled his father in wickedness rather than in talent or military genius, his reign was soon brought to an untimely close. Having laid siege to a city of the Philistines, with whom he had been induced to go to war, he perished the victim of a conspiracy which was formed against him by his friend Baasha who aimed at the supreme power. No sooner had this usurper attained his object than he destroyed the whole family of Jeroboam; exposing those whom he slew within the walls to the voracity of the dogs, and those whom he murdered in the fields to be devoured by the fowls of heaven.

The character of Baasha is described in colours not more flattering than those employed for depicting the administration of his two predecessors. He did not, however, disturb the government of Asa, nor allow his ambitious feelings to seek gratification in territorial aggrandizement. Many years were spent in peace; or, if mutual hostilities occasionally harassed the borders of the contiguous kingdoms, no sanguinary battle moistened their fields with blood. The Israelitish sovereign, it would appear, was exposed to the inconvenience apprehended by Jeroboam, arising from the attachment of his subjects to the ancient seat of the national religion and the splendid temple with which the capital of Judah was adorned. He resolved, therefore, to build a town on the frontier, where he might intercept those who from time to time were disposed to desert to the parent state and the purer religion of Jerusalem. Josephus intimates that Ra-

mah, the city in question, really belonged to Asa, and was only forty furlongs from the metropolis. But it is more probable that its position was nearer Bethel, as Baasha had resolved to plant a garrison in it to command the whole line which separated his dominions from those of the two tribes.

To counteract the design of his enemy, Asa had recourse to a measure which had ultimately the effect of embroiling the kindred nations in the most bitter jealousy and disputes, whilst it placed an overwhelming power in the hands of a rival people who never ceased to employ it for the annoyance of both. He entered into an alliance with the king of Damascus, whom he found it necessary to gain with large presents. "He brought," says the Scripture, "silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the Lord, and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad." The wily Syrian accepted his gifts and listened to his proposals; and though bound by treaty to espouse the interests of Baasha, he "sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel, and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the store-cities of Naphtali." The attempt to build or fortify Ramah was accordingly relinquished; and Asa, taking possession of the materials, the stones and the timber, erected in his own land the strong cities of Geba and Mizpah.

The policy adopted on this occasion by the king of Judah, though it was crowned with temporary success, excited the displeasure of the prophet Hanani, whose mind, enlightened by the foreknowledge of future events, could anticipate the fatal influence which it would exercise on the welfare of his people. After reminding his master of the great deliverance which had been wrought by small means from the "huge host" of the Ethiopians and Lubim, he condemns him for having recourse, on a less urgent crisis, to the aid of the Syrian, who could have no affection for either branch of the Hebrew commonwealth. "Herein thou hast done fool-

ishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars." Conscious, perhaps, that he had acted unwisely, and, by procuring a triumph to the arms of Ben-hadad, increased the strength of a formidable enemy, he gave vent to his rage, and ordered the man of God to be thrown into chains.*

The remainder of his reign passed without being distinguished by any remarkable event; and his death, which was hastened by an incurable disease in his limbs, would have been recorded without any observation, had not the manner of his funeral presented a novelty in Jerusalem. "They buried him," as it is stated in the sacred text, "in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art; and they made a very great burning for him."

It remains a question among commentators whether the body itself was burned, or whether the spices and drugs only were consumed, to neutralize the effluvia arising from the corpse. The Greeks and Romans, it is well known, when they set fire to the pile on which a dead relative was placed, threw frankincense, myrrh, and cassia into the flames in such abundance, that Pliny took occasion to blame their folly as well as extravagance; because, while they offered very sparingly to the gods, who were supposed to enjoy a sweet-smelling savour, they lavished heaps of the most fragrant substances on the breathless clay, which could not possibly experience any satisfaction. But the Jews, it is urged, had hitherto been accustomed to bury their dead, not to burn them; though it is admitted to be possible that they may have learned from the Egyptians the use of spices on such a solemnity, as we find practised at the funeral of Zedekiah, king of Judah. Amidst these doubts, the majority of an-

* 2 Chronicles xvi. 9.

tiquaries hold the belief that the spices and perfumes were actually consumed along with the royal corpse; and they remark that, among the numerous offences with which Asa was chargeable, the inspired annalist condemns his vanity in having his body disposed of according to the manner of the Gentiles and not of his own people. From these circumstances it may be inferred that this king was the first who innovated on the funeral rites of the ancient Hebrews; though it cannot be denied that the custom became very common in a subsequent age, and was esteemed a more honourable ceremony than simple interment.*

Baasha the king of Israel departed this life before the occurrence now mentioned, and was succeeded by his son Elah, the fourth who swayed the sceptre of Jeroboam. Adopting the enmity of Nadab against the Philistines, he renewed or prosecuted the siege of Gibbethon, which the former monarch began. But neither was the heir of Baasha destined to witness the fall of this city; for having given offence to Zimri, one of the captains of his army, he was by the hands of that officer treacherously slain, when reposing in a private house unattended by his guards.

The assassin seated himself on the throne which he had thus rendered vacant, and began his administration by inflicting a severe chastisement on the house of Baasha, who, by their defection and cruelty, had provoked the anger of Jehovah. But though in this respect he fulfilled the intentions of Heaven, he did not confirm his own authority either at home or abroad. The army, who had neither sanctioned the late revolution, nor acknowledged Zimri as their sovereign, set up a second candidate for the regal office in the person of Omri, another of their leaders, who immediately advanced at the head of his troops to Tirzah, now the royal residence.

* See the Commentaries of Patrick and Calmet on the sixteenth chapter of Second Chronicles.

The populace, indifferent to the issue of the contest for power between two treacherous generals, took part with neither, and even refused to defend the town. Zimri, seeing himself deserted, fled to the palace, which he probably hoped to maintain till succour should arrive ; but the building being set on fire, either accidentally or by design, he perished in the flames with the few friends who adhered to his cause. Omri, however, did not find that all obstacles to his accession were thereby removed ; for a large body of the people having given their suffrage in favour of Tibni, the son of Ginath, a civil war ensued, which with varying success continued several years. At length the death of Tibni secured the possession of the kingdom to his rival, who, according to the scriptural narrative, commenced his reign in the thirty-first year of Asa.*

The memory of Omri is associated in sacred history with the building of Samaria, which from this date to the end of their dynasty was the usual residence of the Israelitish monarchs. During the six years he had spent in war with the son of Ginath, he kept the seat of his government at Tirzah, occasionally the capital of the house of Jeroboam. But it should seem that the injuries inflicted upon its principal edifices when he besieged Zimri had rendered it less convenient as a royal residence ; and desirous perhaps to establish himself in the midst of the powerful tribe of Ephraim, he bought a piece of ground from a chieftain named Semer,

* 1 Kings xvi. 8—23. Zimri possessed the throne which he usurped only seven troubled days. Hence the exclamation of Jezebel to Jehu, “ Had Zimri peace who slew his master ? ”

It is said, “ it came to pass when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king’s house, and burnt the king’s house over him with fire, and died.” Some interpreters would rather have it that Omri set the royal palace on fire in order to burn Zimri in it, who had retired thither. The Hebrew words will indeed bear that construction, but the other sense seems more likely.—*Calmet’s Commentary*.

whereon to erect a palace for his own habitation. The rising town, borrowing its appellation from the owner of the land, was at first known as Semereon, which, following the usual process of Grecian orthography, passed in due time into Samaria. In proportion as the power of Israel increased the city of Omri was beautified and strengthened, until, after the lapse of years, it assumed the aspect of a metropolis not unworthy of the Ten Tribes whose affairs were administered within its walls. Nor was its destiny fulfilled until after it had witnessed the hostility of Ben-hadad who envied its prosperity; of Shalmaneser the Assyrian, who wished to render it tributary to his crown; of the Maccabean patriot, who was struggling for independence; of Herod the Great, who seized its decayed fortresses but only to restore them; of Augustus Caesar, who was anxious to conciliate its rebellious inhabitants; and of Adrian, under whose impatient and vindictive rule it finally sunk.

In order to complete the separation between his own people and the subjects of Asa, the king of Israel compelled the former to worship the golden calves at Bethel and Dan; and by introducing some severe regulations which have made his name odious, he prevented them from attending the national festivals at Jerusalem. In other respects, too, his conduct must have been extremely wicked and tyrannical; for he merited at the hand of the inspired writer the disgraceful distinction of having done "worse than all that were before him." At length, after having swayed the sceptre twelve years, his life was cut short, when he was succeeded by his son, the infamous Ahab, who is said to have sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of Jehovah.*

* The statutes of Omri are mentioned by the prophet Micah (vi. 16) when reproving the people of Judah for their manifold defections. "The statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk

It cannot have escaped the notice of the reader that with regard to the dates of succession in the list of the Israelitish princes, compared with those who reigned over Judah, there prevails some degree of obscurity. For example, it is said in the sixteenth chapter of the Second Book of the Chronicles that "in the six and thirtieth year of Asa's kingdom Baasha king of Israel came up." But this statement, it is manifest, cannot apply to the time that Asa had occupied the throne; it must be referred to the period at which the ten tribes separated from their brethren, and thereby gave occasion to a distinct sovereignty at Jerusalem. The "kingdom of Asa," therefore, merely indicates the regal power retained by Rehoboam when the greater part of his dominions was wrested from him. Baasha began to reign in the third year of Asa, and he governed the Israelites only twenty-four years; hence it is clear that he must have died in the twenty-seventh year of the Jewish king. The enterprise, accordingly, which he is said to have undertaken, namely, the building or fortifying of Ramah, must have taken place in the sixteenth year of Asa, which was the thirty-sixth from the division of the kingdoms.*

A similar remark is suggested by the Scriptural account of the accession of Omri to the throne of Israel. He is said, in the sixteenth chapter of the First Book of the Kings,

in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people."

Commentators are generally of opinion that by the "statutes" of the Israelitish king were meant those restriction mentioned in the text on the intercourse between the two nations in matters of religion. But, as this prohibition did not respect the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, it is probable that the prophet alludes to some other usage or regulations adopted by the sister kingdom and made the occasion for idolatrous worship at Jerusalem. Grotius seems to view it in this light; *ab Israhel ad Judam manarunt mala exempla*.

* Rehoboam reigned 17 years, Abijah 3, being 20 in all; which, added to the 16 of Asa, make 36 in all, the period at which "Baasha came up." See *Lightfoot*, vol. i. p. 80.

to have reigned twelve years from the “one and thirtieth year of Asa king of Judah;” whereas in fact he reigned only seven years from that date. The whole length of his reign was twelve years, and it terminated in the thirty-eighth of Asa; wherefore it is obvious that he must have begun to rule in the twenty-sixth year of this son of Abijah, immediately upon the death of Zimri, who perished at Tirzah.

From the days of Omri, as already mentioned, Samaria became the capital of the Israelites; but the attentive reader of the Bible must have observed that the inhabitants are not called Samaritans until after the captivity. In truth, this name, which in the estimation of Jewish writers conveyed a reproach, was not used till the country was occupied by that mixed race of colonists who were planted in it by the Assyrian conquerors. The origin of the people therefore who bore the appellation now described must be traced to the policy of Shalmaneser, who, having removed the natives into lands beyond the Euphrates, sent in their place “men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim.”

As the desolate state of the country gave encouragement to the increase of wild beasts, the new settlers complained to their sovereign that they were devoured by lions: who, imagining that this scourge might be owing to their ignorance of the proper means for conciliating the indigenous gods of Palestine, sent a native priest charged with the office of teaching them the religion of the Hebrews. Thinking it practicable to connect the new ceremonies with their own superstition, they continued to worship their idols as formerly; professing at the same time to adore the Lord Jehovah, without perceiving the incompatibility of things so directly opposed.

It is not known how long they continued in that anomalous condition; but at the return of the Jews from the Baby-

lonian captivity, it appeared that they had entirely abandoned the worship of idols ; and when they asked permission of these exiles to assist them in rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem, they asserted that from the time they had been transported thither by Esarhaddon they had always worshipped the God of Abraham. It is remarkable, too, that from this epoch the Scripture does not reproach them with idolatry; though it openly condemns their jealousy towards the purer Hebrews, the calumnies which they propagated against them at the court of Persia, and the base arts to which they had recourse for impeding the restoration of the sacred edifice.

It does not appear that there was in Samaria a temple common to all the people who had come from beyond the Euphrates till the arrival of Alexander the Great in Judea. Before this time each followed his own manner of devotion, and worshipped the Lord where he thought proper. But at length they attained the conviction, derived from the reading of the Books of Moses which were in their hands, and from the example of the Jews their neighbours, that Jehovah desired not to be served, at least in the more solemn rites of religion, except in the place which he had specially chosen. Accordingly, not being allowed to go to the temple of Jerusalem, they resolved to build a temple on Mount Gerizim, near the city of Shechem, which was then the metropolis of their kingdom. Sanballat, at that time governor of the Samaritans, addressed himself to Alexander, and informed him that he had a son-in-law, Manasseh, the brother of Jaddua the high-priest of the Jews, and that there were many others with him of his own nation who were desirous to have a suitable edifice erected for the worship of their God. He represented at the same time to the Macedonian prince that this project would prove advantageous to his government, inasmuch as it would divide the Jews, a

people always prone to sedition, and render them less able to attempt dangerous innovations.

Alexander readily gave to Sanballat full permission to accomplish his patriotic intentions, and to gratify such of the Samaritans as were inclined to the Jewish rites with a temple fitted to rival the splendid structure on Mount Moriah. The people accordingly began to build on Gerizim a sacred dwelling for the emblems of their faith, which they ever afterwards frequented, and to which their descendants still repair, as the place appointed by Jehovah to offer the sacrifices enjoined in the Mosaical law. It was of this temple that the woman of Samaria said to Jesus Christ, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship;" and respecting which was pronounced this divine maxim, "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The Samaritans did not remain long in obedience to Alexander. They revolted the following year, and as a suitable punishment were expelled by him from their lands, which he conferred upon certain Macedonians; whilst he gave the superintendence of the whole province to the Jewish authorities who had continued faithful. This preference on the part of the conqueror contributed greatly to augment the hatred and animosity which prevailed between the two nations to whom the possession of the holy land had fallen. Of the Samaritans he led six thousand into Egypt whom Sanballat had sent to Tyre as auxiliary troops. He assigned to them as personal property certain rich fields in the Thebaid, and confided to their charge that most interesting portion of the ancient kingdom of the Pharaohs. But distance of place did not abate their hereditary dislike of the Jews. On the banks of the Nile, as well as on the shores of the Mediterranean, they cherished their ancient antipathy;

maintaining among a people who did not understand the grounds of their quarrel, that Mount Gerizim was the true site of the divine oracles, and that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were depraved impostors or ignorant pretenders. This dispute, which threatened to disturb the public tranquillity, was at length brought before Ptolemy Philometor, who, if we may give credit to Josephus,—not always an impartial writer where such local prejudices are concerned,—decided in favour of the Jews.

Antiochus Epiphanes, who obtained Syria as his share of the Macedonian conquests, wished to compel the Jews to relinquish their peculiar ritual, and adopt the religion of the Gentiles. They resisted, it is well known, with the utmost determination this tyrannical measure, and exposed themselves to the last extremity of suffering rather than renounce what they owed to their God. It had been observed with regard to the Samaritans, that when the Jews were in prosperity they did not fail to call themselves Hebrews lineally sprung from the family of Abraham; but as soon as the others fell into disgrace, or were subjected to persecution, they maintained they had nothing in common with them, choosing rather to be esteemed Phenicians by extraction, or at most descendants of Joseph by his son Manasseh. On the present occasion, accordingly, they wrote to Antiochus, that being of Sidonian origin they had only become casual residents at Shechem, where certain misfortunes which had happened to their countrymen made it necessary for them to adopt some of the usages peculiar to the Jews, such as the observation of the Sabbath and the offering of sacrifices; that they had accordingly built a temple on Gerizim, which, however, they had not dedicated to any particular divinity; that since he had thought proper to make the Jews feel the effects of his indignation, and to chastise them for their malignant obstinacy, they entreated he would not confound them

with that people : and concluded by assuring him that they were ready to obey his orders, and to consecrate their temple to the Grecian Jupiter. Antiochus, gained by their arguments, wrote to the governor of the province not to molest the Samaritans on account of their religion.

If we must receive with caution the narrative of the Jewish antiquary, on whose authority chiefly these statements are made, it is not less necessary to exercise discretion with respect to the things which the Samaritans relate to their own advantage. The work on which the principal reliance is placed is their Chronicle, composed, it is thought, since the time of Constantine, and under the christian emperors. Confiding in this record they believe that Joshua, the leader of the chosen people, gave orders to erect their famous edifice on Gerizim, and that he established in it one of the posterity of Aaron as the high-priest. They produce a succession of pontiffs, who, as they pretend, have served the Lord in the same place without interruption from the days of the son of Nun to the present time. They do not recognise Jeroboam as the author of their schism, nor the transportation of the Israelites by Tiglath-peleser and his successors. They say that the kings of Syria, leagued with the sovereign of Jerusalem, rose in arms against the Persian emperor; who, after subduing the country of his more immediate enemies, advanced to Shechem, where he did not give the inhabitants more than seven days to prepare for leaving their possessions, and threatened with death every one who should be found in Samaria after this limited interval.*

The Samaritans, who received at an early period the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, have preserved them in the

* See Joseph. Jewish Antiquities, book xi. c. 6—8. Basnage, Hist. des Juifs, liv. viii. c. 1. Liber Josue, seu Chron. Samaritan, apud Hottinger. Calmet's Dictionary, under "Samaritans."

same tongue and in the same character in which they were written for their use ; that is, in the ancient Hebrew or Phenician, which at present is denominated the Samaritan, in order to distinguish it from the modern Hebrew, commonly seen in the books of the Jews. These last, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, laid aside their old characters, and adopted those of the Chaldeans, to which they were accustomed during their long exile, and which they still continue to use. Commentators have remarked some differences between the Samaritan Pentateuch and that of their neighbours ; especially in the frequent insertion by the former of the name Gerizim, which they appear to have employed with the view of favouring their pretensions relative to the sacred mountain whercon Jehovah had fixed the seat of his worship.*

The Samaritan Chronicle relates that the Emperor Adrian, after he had levelled the walls of Jerusalem, proceeded to Shechem, now called Naplous—a corruption of Neapolis—and took away all their books, including their genealogy and histories. He forbade them to circumcise their children, or to observe in a public manner the rites of their religion ; but so little were his edicts regarded, that troops were found

* It is known to every theological reader that no copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch had reached Europe prior to the sixteenth century. Archbishop Usher was the first, or one of the first, who succeeded in procuring manuscripts of it from the East. He had observed that Eusebius, Diodorus of Tharsus, St Jerome, Cyril of Alexandria, Procopius of Gaza, and George Syncellus, with several other eminent writers, quoted the Samaritan Pentateuch, and therefore he resolved, at whatever expense, to purchase certain copies in Syria or Palestine. In 1616, Pierre de la Vallé bought a beautiful copy at Damascus, which was subsequently given to the priests of the Oratory at Paris. It was printed a few years afterwards ; but upon examination it was found less correct than the manuscripts belonging to Usher, from which the impression inserted in the London Polyglott was taken. See Cusserii Epist. ad Lud. Capell. Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, liv. i. c. 10. Vandal. Epist. ad Morin, in tract. de Idol. : *Sentimens de quelques Théologiens de Hollande*. Prideaux's *Connection*, book vi. Calmet's *Dictionary*, under "Pentateuch."

necessary to enforce the imperial will whenever the return of the periodical festival called the people to the holy mount. When Zeno was on the throne of Constantinople, they made one of their leaders king in the city of Naplous, and slew a great number of Christians ; for which offence the emperor punished them severely, and put their pretended monarch to death. They rose again under the government of Justinian, burnt the churches of the Holy Land, and massacred the bishop of Naplous with many of his followers. Their fury indeed proceeded so far, that his majesty sent a body of regular troops who suppressed the insurrection by destroying most of the rebels.

Another chronicle states that the Samaritans separated from the ancient Jews after the death of Samson, under the judicature of Eli, because at that period, as they allege, the presence and favour of Jehovah were withdrawn from them ; darkness took the place of light and covered all who dwelt in Palestine, with the exception of the few who retired to Mount Gerizim. There, they maintain, they have always had priests, and at particular times have also had kings who exercised an independent authority over them. In the same work they assert that Samuel was a magician, and that all his successors were apostates from the Jewish faith.

There are still a few Samaritans at Shechem, where they have priests who consider themselves regularly descended from the stock of Aaron. One of them, who is invested with the high-priesthood, keeps constant residence on Mount Gerizim, offering up in the name of his people the wonted sacrifices, and making known to their brethren of the Dispersion the season of the passover and the days of the other festivals.

These observations, which have been perhaps extended to an undue length, seemed naturally suggested by the sacred narrative which records the foundation of Samaria by the

hands of Omri, king of Israel. This active but unprincipled sovereign left the sceptre to his son Ahab, whose name is branded with a mark of ignominy still deeper than even that which darkens the memory of his predecessor. He has been described indeed as not less weak than wicked ; and, being entirely under the influence of his wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre, he consented to all the innovations she projected for the establishment of the idolatrous worship to which she had been accustomed in her native land. Hitherto the golden calves had been the only object of religious veneration, but now the gods of other nations were introduced, under the royal sanction, as more worthy of being adored than the Lord Jehovah, whom most of the Israelites were still willing to remember as the protector of their fathers. Ahab built a temple at Samaria, erected an image and consecrated a grove to Baal, the abomination of the Sidonians. His queen maintained a multitude of priests who professed the same superstition, and the idolatry of Tyre became to a considerable extent the national faith of the kingdom of Jeroboam. Belief in the true God was not, indeed, altogether proscribed ; but the emblems of the divine attributes placed at Bethel and Dan were not now regarded as more venerable than the effigies of Baal, or the image of Astarte, which were every where associated with them.

The sun and moon, here represented under the names of pagan idols, still continued to be adored throughout a large portion of the eastern world ; and as the festivals by which their genial powers were commemorated were commonly very cheerful, it is not surprising that an ignorant and licentious people should have been ever ready to exchange the more severe ritual of the Mosaical law for the orgies of a corrupted sabaism. The Jews, accordingly, were at no time averse to the usages of the heathen among whom they

dwelt. The conduct of their fathers, when passing through the country of Moab on their journey to the promised land, and the facility with which they were induced to join in the revels of Bethpeor, were not unfrequently imitated at a later period, even in the midst of the heritage conquered for them by the right hand of Jehovah. But though their practice was on too many occasions opposed to their principles, and their love of pleasure was often seen to lead them to the shady groves of the false gods when they ought to have repaired to the temple of the Almighty, their hearts were nevertheless smitten with dismay at the change introduced by their king and the daughter of Ethbaal, who seemed to contemplate an entire revolution in faith as well as in worship.

When the stream of idolatry threatened to inundate all the land of Israel, and to wash away every trace of the pure religion inherited from the fathers of their nation, Divine Providence raised up the prophet Elijah to stem the current which was fast undermining their ancient institutions, and to call the people from lying vanities to the worship of the true God. This distinguished prophet was an inhabitant of Gilead, the country beyond Jordan, and derived the epithet usually attached to his name from Thesbe, a small town in the tribe of Gad, where he appears to have spent the earlier portion of his life. Grieved to witness such a general apostasy from the belief and usages of former times, he prayed earnestly to God that he would stretch forth the rod of his power, and make manifest by a visible token his displeasure against such flagrant wickedness. In return to his supplication he was authorized to declare in the hearing of Ahab, that for three whole years no rain should fall in Samaria or the adjoining countries, which, owing to this privation, were doomed to endure a very grievous famine.

Meantime he was commanded to retire into his own province and take up his abode near the brook Cherith, where,

during the scarcity which ensued, he was miraculously fed by the hand of Heaven. Having towards the end of the destined period obtained an interview with the king, he not only defended himself against the charge of disaffection to his country, but assured his royal master that all the evils under which the people groaned were occasioned by his abandonment of the national religion, and the shameful superstition whereby it had been supplanted. He therefore requested that Ahab, in order to satisfy his subjects as to the comparative power of the rival objects of their worship, would call together all Israel to Mount Carmel, and summon thither the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Astarte, whom Jezebel fed at her table.

The humbled monarch complied with this request, and assembled on the slopes of Carmel a multitude of the Israelites, with all the priests of the Sidonian idolatry. Seeing his deluded countrymen before him, the indignant prophet exclaimed, How long will he halt between two opinions ! If Jehovah be God, follow him ; but if Baal be the sovereign of nature, then let him receive your adoration and obedience. The people, ashamed or confounded, answered not a word. To determine the question at issue, Elijah proposed that a sacrifice should be prepared by either party, and that the limbs of the animal should be laid on the altar, accompanied with the usual quantity of fuel, but that no fire should be applied. The god whom the pagan priests adored was a personification of the igneous principle, an emblem of the solar light and heat ; whence it might be inferred that, if he could hear the prayers of his votaries, he would descend upon the altar raised to his honour, and consume the bullock which his servants had cut in pieces and spread on the wood. The details of this memorable contest are given with great minuteness by the sacred

historian, who seems to take pleasure in describing the rage and dismay which seized the false prophets when they found Baal deaf to their entreaties. They leaped like maniacs; cut themselves with knives to awaken the compassion of their idol; and repeated their cries from morning even until noon, “but there was no voice nor any that answered.”

When mid-day was past and the solar orb began to decline, Elijah made preparations for an appeal to the God of his fathers. He repaired the altar of Jehovah which had been broken down, and selecting twelve stones in memory of the twelve tribes of Israel, he used them for the principal parts of his new erection. As the victim laid upon it was to be consumed by supernatural means, he desired that all the apparatus employed in this divine rite should be copiously drenched with water. But, lest the ignorant worshippers who stood around should be deceived into the persuasion that he was only a more potent conjuror than the priests of Baal, he did not proceed to the solemnities of his office until the time of the evening sacrifice, when the sun was fallen low in the heavens, and the strength of its beams was spent. “And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me; that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.”

This eloquent address was not offered up in vain, for the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. The people, astonished and alarmed at this display of divine power, threw themselves on

the ground, exclaiming in the deep feeling of a renovated faith, Jehovah, he is the God ! Jehovah, he is the God !

The triumph of Elijah was now complete. The priests of the sun (for those of Astarte, or the moon, seem to have had no share in the conflict at Carmel) had failed to prove that the God they adored was an intelligent being ; that he could hear the voice of a suppliant ; or lend assistance amidst peril and suffering. They had lifted up their voices with the most frightful energy, at noon the hour of his might, crying, O Baal, hear us : but there was no sound in return, no sign vouchsafed, no consciousness manifested. The prophet of Jehovah, on the contrary, without violent gesticulation or frantic shouts, solicited the interposition of the Omnipotent, even when the shades of night were about to fall upon the earth ; and the fire of God fell upon the altar, consuming the sacrifice, and confirming the mission of the holy priest who offered it.

Ahab, whose confidence in the prophets of Baal was not, it is probable, at any time very firm, having witnessed their discomfiture on this momentous occasion, readily yielded them up to the pious resentment of Elijah. Their deaths satisfied the people that they had reposed their trust on a false foundation, and they therefore saw them perish without regret or sympathy at the brook Kishon, the place of their execution. The Almighty now listened to the entreaty of his servants, and sent rain upon the earth. A little cloud seen from the top of Carmel announced that the anger of Jehovah was appeased ; that the privations of Israel were about to terminate ; and that the earth would again yield its increase.*

But the victory which Elijah gained for the true faith did not secure his own safety or repose. The queen, enraged at the massacre of her priests, vowed revenge against him ; de-

* 1 Kings xviii. 21—44.

claring that before twenty-four hours were passed he should share the fate of those whose lives he had taken away. To escape the violence meditated by this vindictive woman he fled into the territory of Judah, whence he made his way into Arabia Petraea, and finally established his temporary abode on Horeb the mount of God. The sufferings endured in so long a journey reduced him to the very brink of despair; and he entreated that Jehovah of his goodness would remove him out of this world, as being no longer able to perform an acceptable service, and unwilling to survive the extinction of a religion to which he had devoted his strength and affections. At this moment, so dark to the eye of his faith, a prospect was opened up, where he was permitted to behold the ascendancy of better principles and the cause of truth nobly vindicated. He received a divine commission to anoint Hazael as future king of Syria, Jehu to succeed the house of Ahab on the throne of Israel, and Elisha, who was destined, when he himself should be taken to heaven, to discharge the prophetic office; charges all of which had for their object the extermination of idolatry or the punishment of those by whom it was encouraged.

Meanwhile, after a short enjoyment of prosperity, a confederacy was formed by the Syrian princes, led by Ben-hadad, a name at that period common to the kings of Damascus. Confident of success, they summoned Ahab to surrender his capital into their hands at discretion, claiming at the same time a right to his gold and silver, his wives and children, and whatsoever else was pleasant in his eyes. This insolent message was enforced by the assurance that the Syrian despot, at the head of thirty-two kings, and of a host so large as to be able to grasp in their hands all the dust of Samaria, was ready, in case of refusal, to commence the siege. Ahab, fearful of the issue of a war waged in circumstances so disadvantageous, refused not to acknowledge himself a

vassal and even a tributary to the crown of Damascus ; but when Ben-hadad farther demanded that the whole wealth of the royal household and all the inmates of the harem should be instantly relinquished for his use, the other replied to his vaunting and menaces in these memorable terms,—“ Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.”*

The event proved the soundness of this observation, which the experience of mankind has since rendered proverbial. As the Syrian troops were feasting negligently in their camp, certain young Israelites of high rank, not amounting to more than two hundred and thirty, defeated them with great slaughter. Ben-hadad, who set the example of dissipation, seems also to have taken the lead in a disgraceful flight towards his own borders ; but though discomfited he did not entirely abandon his enterprise, consoling himself and his followers with the notion that the God of Israel was only “ god of the hills,” and that on the plain their chariots and horsemen would without doubt maintain their superiority. At the return of the year, accordingly, he took the field, accompanied by an army equal in number and equipments to the one which had been so unaccountably foiled by a handful of youths. In comparison of the Syrians on this occasion, the children of Israel are described as two little flocks of kids pitched before them, while the others filled the whole country. But the soldiers of Ahab, being cheered with the promise of divine aid, kept their ground seven days, without shrinking, in the presence of the overwhelming host with whom they were about to contend for the independence of their country. At length a battle ensued, in which the invaders were again completely overthrown with the loss of one hundred thousand footmen who fell by the sword of Israel. The fugitive

* 1 Kings xx. 11.

sought refuge in Aphek, a city in the tribe of Asher ; but here, instead of obtaining succour, they encountered a dreadful aggravation to their calamities ; the walls which encompassed the place being precipitated on their heads so as to crush no fewer than twenty-seven thousand of their number.*

The Syrian king, unable to effect his retreat, found himself compelled to surrender in person, and to carry with him as prisoners into the presence of Ahab the greater number of his generals. The conqueror received them honourably, and spared their lives on condition that they should restore all they had taken from the Israelites ; relinquish the territorial acquisitions made by them in former wars ; and permit a section of the city of Damascus to be occupied by such of his subjects as might choose to reside there. Ahab was greatly blamed for this unusual lenity, which was doubtless inconsistent with the spirit of the age, and perhaps not altogether agreeable to the principles of sound policy. He was met by a prophet who addressed him in these words : “ Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.” No one, therefore, can be surprised when he reads that the king of Israel “ went to his house heavy and displeased.”

But his providential deliverance from the Syrians neither reconciled him to the worship of the true God nor taught him respect for the civil institutions of his country. A piece of ground which lay near his palace excited his covetous spirit, and he resolved to have it. Naboth, the proprietor, declared that the veneration due to hereditary posses-

* Aphek or Aphaca, as it is called by profane writers, was situated in Libanus upon the river Adonis, between Heliopolis and Biblos. It is supposed to have been swallowed up by an earthquake, and to be now covered with the waters of a lake.

sions would not allow him to sell it, nor even to accept land of equal value in its place. It was disgraceful in a Hebrew, and to a certain extent a violation of the Mosaical law, to alienate an inheritance which had descended to him from the head of his family. The counsel of his crafty queen enabled Ahab to effect his purpose, in defiance at once of justice and of national feeling. She caused their unfortunate neighbour to be accused of blasphemy towards Heaven and disaffection to the king; and at length by means of false witnesses procured his condemnation. Naboth was stoned to death, and his vineyard fell to the crown; but no sooner was the crime accomplished than Elijah appeared, glowing with indignation, and charged with denunciations of divine vengeance. "In the place," said he to the alarmed monarch, "where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood—even thine." A fate still more dreadful was announced to Jezebel, because she had stirred up her husband to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord.*

Reverting now to the affairs of Judah, we may observe that Asa, after reigning forty-one years, was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat, whose prudence and piety are much

* "As it is natural to all men to love and value the ancient possessions that have been in their family, so the law of Moses prohibited the alienation of lands from one tribe or family to another, unless a man was reduced to poverty; in which case he might sell it till the Jubilee, but then it was to revert to him again." Levit. xxy. 15, 25, 28.—*Pool's Annotations.*

"By the law of Moses it was death to blaspheme God (Lev. xxiv. 16), and by custom it was death to revile the king, Exod. xxii. 28. Now, in order to make safe work, the evidences (as they were instructed) accused Naboth of both these crimes, that the people might be the better satisfied to see him stoned. There is this difference, however, to be observed between these two crimes, that if a man had only blasphemed God, he was to be tried by the Great Court at Jerusalem, and his goods came to his heirs; whereas when a man was executed for treason against the king, his estate went to the exchequer, and was forfeited to him against whom the offence was committed; and for this reason it was that they accused Naboth of this crime likewise, that his estate might be confiscated, and Ahab by that means get possession of his vineyard."—*Patrick's Commentary.*

extolled by the sacred writers. Pursuing the policy recommended by the example of his father, he fortified the principal cities, maintained a powerful army, encouraged learning, and provided means for the regular administration of justice. The Philistines, who had not raised their heads since the vigorous government of David, appear to have paid him tribute; whilst the Arabian tribes on the southern border were content to purchase his protection by the usual presents given in those days to paramount kingdoms. The Scripture informs us that he entered "into affinity" with Ahab; by which expression is meant that he married his son Jehoram to Athaliah, the cruel and ambitious daughter of the Israelitish sovereigns, and thereby introduced into his house a large share of the calamities denounced against the offspring of Jezebel.

The lapse of several generations had allayed the bitter animosities which arose on the separation of the two kingdoms, and rendered the subjects of both more disposed to countenance the national amity that suited the views of their respective rulers. Ahab, for example, was seized with a strong desire to recover Ramoth, a town which lay beyond Jordan in the land of Gilead and tribe of Gad, and at this time in the possession of the Syrians, who had refused to restore it. Jehoshaphat being at Samaria on a visit to his royal friend, was asked to join him in an expedition against the governor of Ben-hadad, who not only held the disputed city, but also maintained a garrison within the borders of Judah. The son of Asa, little inclined to engage in an undertaking so important without consulting the will of Heaven, requested that the other would inquire at the word of Jehovah concerning the event of their projected enterprise. Ahab had secured among the prophets a strong party at all times disposed to favour his views, and who on this occasion were unanimous in the assurance that the attack on

Ramoth-Gilead was approved by God, and that it would accordingly be delivered into the hands of the king. But Michaiah had the courage and honesty to declare that his brethren were influenced by the spirit of falsehood, and that the expedition, so far from being successful, would prove fatal to Israel, and more especially to the monarch himself, whose heart was set on its accomplishment. His voice, however, was not regarded, and his free remonstrances gave offence. He was thrown into prison by command of his sovereign, who forthwith marshalling his forces, crossed the Jordan and proceeded into the territory of Gad.

The menace of the prophet, however, roused it should seem the fears of Ahab ; for, in order to escape the fate denounced against him, he resolved to enter the battle in disguise, while he exhorted Jehoshaphat to fight in his royal robes. But the Syrian chiefs, justly ascribing the renewal of the war to his instigation, instructed their men to single out the king of Israel and ensure his fall. The change of dress might have defeated this ungenerous resolution, had not an arrow, shot at a venture, pierced his harness and inflicted a mortal wound which put an end to his life about the setting of the sun. The dead body being carried to Samaria was committed to the sepulchre of his fathers ; whilst the bloody chariot, washed in a pool near the city where dogs were wont to drink, realized the prediction pronounced by Elijah when sent to condemn the murder of Naboth.*

* " There is a dispute among the learned as to the accomplishment of this prophecy. At first it was no doubt intended to be literally fulfilled, but upon Ahab's repentance the punishment was transferred from him to his son Jehoshaphat, in whom it was actually accomplished ; for ' his dead body was cast into the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite for the dogs to devour it.' 2 Kings ix. 25. Since Ahab's blood therefore was licked by dogs, not at Jezreel but at Samaria, it seems necessary that we should understand the Hebrew word which our translation renders *in the place where*, not as denoting the place but the *manner* in which the thing was done ; and so the

Jehoshaphat returned in safety to his own country, where he resumed his meritorious labours for the improvement of his people and the advancement of divine studies. He enforced on the priests and Levites a regular attention to their duty in the public service of God, and the obligation of devoting their time to the pursuit of such learning as might adorn their profession. "He sent to his princes, even to Ben-hail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. And with them he sent Levites, and priests; and they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people."*

His absence from Jerusalem during the expedition into Gilead encouraged the Ammonites, Moabites, and other predatory tribes, to organize a confederacy with the view of invading his kingdom. Advancing along the western shores of the Dead sea, they approached the rich fields of Engedi, which they began to plunder. Jehoshaphat, who apprehended punishment at the hand of the Almighty for his late alliance with the ungodly bands of Israel, betook himself to prayer and supplication; after which solemn service he led his troops to face the enemy, who continued their ravages at Hazezon-Tamar. But before the hostile bodies met, "the Lord sent ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to de-

sense of the passage will be, 'that as dogs licked, or in like manner as dogs licked, Naboth's blood, even so shall they lick thine; observe what I say, even thine.'"—*Patrick's Commentary*.

* 2 Chronicles xvii. 7, 8, 9.

stroy another. And when Judah came toward the watch-tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped."

The Hebrews returned to Jerusalem loaded with booty, animated with pious emotions, and heartily disposed to confide in the God of their fathers, who had blessed them with success so signal and unexpected. The alliance with Israel was continued or renewed in the days of Ahaziah the son of Ahab; at which period the two kings entered into the commercial speculation so celebrated in ancient history, of which the object was to open a trade with India through the channel of the Red sea and Persian gulf. The undertaking, indeed, proved abortive, owing chiefly to the ignorance of the mariners, who could not steer their ships through the straits of Ezion-geber, which to this day are encumbered with a very dangerous ridge of rocks. Jehoshaphat being convinced that this disaster was a judgment sent upon him by God for entering into treaty with an impious prince, sent his next fleet from Elath, wherein he would not suffer the king of Israel to have any concern. On this occasion the success of the navigators is understood to have been more encouraging, though the particulars were not deemed worthy of being introduced into the sacred narrative.

Ahaziah did not long survive his fruitless attempt to procure gold from Ophir, meeting soon afterwards with an accident which deprived him of life. He fell through a lattice in an upper chamber, while residing in his palace at Samaria, and was so severely hurt, that no human means could restore him to health. At his demise the throne of Israel was ascended by his brother Jehoram, the son also of Ahab and Jezebel, whose reign, though little glorious to him self, was diversified by some memorable incidents, and closed by a series of tragical events.

The first call upon his patriotism and military skill was occasioned by the revolt of the Moabites, whose king, described in the Bible as a sheepmaster, was wont to pay to the Israelites a hundred thousand lambs, and a hundred thousand rams, with their wool. In this expedition he was joined by Jehoshaphat and the prince of the Edomites, who also found some reason to be dissatisfied with the same great shepherd; and the combined host having assembled near the Dead sea, advanced boldly into the desert which unites the Holy Land to Arabia, with the intention of inflicting a severe chastisement upon the faithless Mesha.

But, before they could encounter the Moabites, the confederated army were doomed to suffer from the assault of a foe much more to be dreaded in the wilderness than the swords of the bravest soldiers. When they left the valley of the Jordan they found themselves in a sandy plain parched with eternal drought; and after fetching a compass of seven days' journey, there was no water for the host nor for the cattle which followed them. Threatened with a painful death, the king consulted the prophet Elisha, who recommended that deep trenches should be dug along the plain to receive the moisture that flowed under the surface from the adjoining hills. "And it came to pass in the morning that there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water." The enemy, advancing at sunrise to attack the invaders, saw the pools on the opposite slope of the hill, which reflecting the rays of the early light presented to their eyes the appearance of blood. Concluding that the allies had destroyed one another by mutual slaughter, they hastened forward to collect the spoil, when meeting with an unexpected resistance, they were defeated with great loss. It was in vain that Mesha laboured to restrain the flight of his armed herdsmen, or to cut his way through the Hebrews at the head of seven hundred chosen

men. Urged at length by despair, he slew his eldest son, and offered him as a burnt-sacrifice to the malign deities of his country ; but no expedient could stop the progress of the conquerors, who reduced his towns, wasted his fields, and cut down all the trees that were in his land.*

In the account of this miraculous interposition, the name of Elisha is mentioned as having succeeded to the prophetic office in place of his master Elijah. The “ translation ” of the latter had recently occurred ; previously to which he visited the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel and Jericho, and took leave of them with such solemnity that they were impressed with the conviction they should see him no more. The same apprehension had seized his attendant, whom a short time before he summoned from the plough, who accordingly resolved not to leave him so long as he should continue upon earth. With this view he followed him across the *Jordan*, the waters of which, being touched by Elijah’s mantle, divided into two parts, and allowed them both to pass over on dry ground. When they had reached the eastern bank, the great prophet said to Elisha, “ Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee.” The other replied, “ Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing : nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee ; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder ; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”†

The falling mantle was the emblem of bequeathing to Elisha the office to which his pious ambition had aspired ; and, agreeably to the language of the ancient Hebrews, he who was charged with the official duties of any appointment

* 2 Kings iii. 21—27.

† 2 Kings ii. 9, 12.

was said to receive the spirit that belonged to it. For example, when the seventy elders were chosen in the wilderness, the voice of Jehovah was heard saying to Moses, “Bring them into the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee; and I will come down and talk with thee there; and *I will take of the spirit that is upon thee, and will put it upon them*, and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.” In this case, the removal of the spirit from one man to others denoted the transference of official power; and it may be inferred that when Elisha requested to have a double measure of the spirit which was upon Elijah, he meant a full inheritance of the prophetical function with which the other had been invested. The expression “double,” as used in Scripture, does not always imply two-fold, but simply abundant or ample. Jerusalem is described by Isaiah as having “received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins;” and Jeremiah prays with respect to his enemies that the Lord would “destroy them with double destruction.”*

But perhaps the explanation of Grotius may appear more satisfactory. He says, the “double portion” in the mouth of Elisha meant nothing more than that he should be recognised by the inspired father who was about to ascend, as his eldest son, compared with the young prophets at Bethel and Jericho. The first-born was entitled to two shares of the paternal inheritance, whilst the rest of the children received only one; and hence to obtain a double allotment of goods was equivalent to the distinction of primogeniture. Every member of the prophetical schools in the sacred towns was esteemed a “son” of the chief teacher or head of the institution; but Elisha was desirous to be acknowledged as the

* Numbers xi. 16, 17. Isaiah xl. 2. Jeremiah xvii. 13.

eldest son, the one destined to the succession, and to be held as the chief prophet in the land of Israel.*

The miracles performed by Elisha proved beyond controversy that his petition was granted by his patron who had ascended in the fiery chariot, and by the great head of the church to whose service he had devoted himself. He purified the waters of Jericho, which were found deleterious in their quality; increased the supply of the widow's oil; restored to life the child of the Shunammite; destroyed the hurtful energy in noxious herbs; and fed a hundred men on twenty loaves. His fame as a performer of wonderful cures spread into Syria, and hence Naaman, the favourite general of Ben-hadad, came to him to be healed of his leprosy. Nor was his power always withheld when it became necessary to punish fraud or insolence. The forty-two youths in Bethel who mocked at his bald head, and Gehazi his servant who attempted to deceive him, felt the weight of his displeasure in sudden and severe judgments.†

After gaining a victory over the Moabites in circumstances so peculiar, Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem, where he appears to have spent the remainder of his reign in peace. At his demise he was succeeded by his son Jehoram, the husband of Athaliah, the sanguinary spirit of whose house seems to have guided the counsels of his court. To secure

* Commentary on the place. "Putant quidam poscere Elisam ut duplam habeat vim spiritus ad spiritum Eliæ, quod superbum fuerat: eum contra postulet ut sit velut primogenitus inter discipulos ejus. Primogeniti enim de hereditate duas ferebant partes, cum ceteri ferrent singulas. Et 2 quod hic est in Hebræo pro portione sumi apparet. Deut. xxi. 17, ubi de jure primogenituræ sermo."

† In the fifth volume of Saurin's *Discours Historiques, Critiques, Théologiques, et Moraux*, may be found some judicious observations on the subjects discussed in the text; more especially in the discourse entitled, "Eli enlevé au Ciel." The reader will also find in Stackhouse's *History of the Bible a Dissertation on the Translation of Enoch and Elijah*, which, with Bishop Gledes's Appendix to it, is worthy of much attention. Vol. ii. quarto edition, p. 334.

tranquillity or to prevent competition, he gave orders that all the late king's sons should be slain without reserve. Intelligence of this atrocious proceeding excited the wrath of the prophet Elijah, who is said to have addressed a letter to him, in which he was assured that "God would execute great judgments upon him, because he had not imitated his own fathers, but had followed the wicked courses of the kings of Israel." He was farther accused of having compelled the tribe of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem to leave the holy worship of their own God and to serve idols, as Ahab had done in Samaria. To this was added the still heavier charge that he had slain his own brethren, without even the pretext of crime alleged against them, and had taken away the lives of all the best and most upright among his subjects. As a punishment for these violations of the divine law, he was threatened with the destruction of his people, the capture of his wives and children by the hand of an enemy, and the attack of a loathsome disease in his own person, from which he should not be relieved but by the hand of death.*

Not a word of this denunciation fell to the ground. The reign which began in blood proceeded in idolatry and defeat, till the fearful doom foretold to him was completely realized. The Edomites, who had been in subjection to the crown of Judah since they were subdued by King David, revolted from Jehoram and seized Elath, his only remaining port on the Red sea. His father, as has been already repeated, anxious to revive the commerce which in the days of Solomon had poured immense wealth into the national treasury, bestowed great care on his marine and the harbours which belonged to his dominions on the Arabian gulf. Deprived of the experienced seamen whom Hiram lent to the son of David, Jenoshaphat did not indeed find his efforts followed by

* 2 Chronicles xxi. 12—15. Josephus, book ix. chap. 5.

the same degree of success which his ancestor had enjoyed ; nevertheless, as the object he had in view appeared essential to the prosperity of his kingdom, he meant not to relinquish the hope of reviving through its ancient channel the trade with Southern Asia. But the pusillanimous temper of his heir encouraged the inhabitants of Edom to rise up against him, to expel the Hebrew settlers from their lands, and to seize Elath with all its shipping and stores. Nor did this mortifying blow put an end to his calamities. The Philistines, who had also resumed sufficient courage to defy his arms, acting in concert with some of the nomadic tribes on the Arabian frontier, invaded the country, surprised his capital, made his household prisoners, and slew all his sons but one. At length he himself fell a victim to the painful distemper foretold by Elijah, and died unhonoured and unregretted.*

While these events were taking place in Judah the king of Israel involved himself in a new war with Ben-hadad of Damascus. Ascribing his want of success to the power or wisdom of Elisha, the Syrian prince resolved to put him to death ; and with this view he sent by night a body of his best troops to invest Dothan, the place where the prophet dwelt, in such a manner that he could not possibly escape. In truth, Gehazi his servant thought all was lost when at the break of day he saw the surrounding country covered with horsemen and chariots. But the man of God having called upon the name of Jehovah, was enabled to strike the whole armament with blindness ; and conducting them to the gates of Samaria gave them leave to depart, after convincing them that they were entirely at his mercy.

But this lenity did not soften the heart of Ben-hadad,

* 2 Chronicles xxi. 8, 17, 19. " He departed without being desired," says the Scripture : " Howbeit, they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchre of the kings."

who resolved to prosecute the war with the utmost vigour. He laid siege to the capital, which was soon reduced to the utmost distress, so that the inhabitants were obliged to have recourse to the most loathsome and unnatural food. Jehoram, apparently rendered frantic by the symptoms of wretchedness which met his eye on every side, gave orders to lay hands upon the prophet, whom he now accused as the cause of the dreadful visitation with which his people were afflicted. He commanded an officer to go to his house and take off his head, while he himself followed to ensure the execution, or to enjoy the sight of a punishment which he hoped would avert the displeasure of Heaven. But ere the envoy appeared Elisha said to those who sat with him, " See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head ? Look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door and hold him fast at the door : is not the sound of his master's feet behind him ? "*

When the king arrived he gave utterance to the doubt and unbelief which distracted his heart, saying Why should I wait for Jehovah any longer ? He is either unable or unwilling to save me. At this moment the prophet announced to him in the name of Heaven that before twenty-four hours should pass there would be abundance of all sorts of food in Samaria. Next morning the prediction was fulfilled ; for the Syrians, struck with a supernatural panic, deserted their camp and fled in the utmost confusion, leaving behind them an immense quantity of provisions. Strange sounds in the air seemed to indicate the approach of a mighty army consisting of cavalry and charioteers ; and concluding that the Egyptians or some of the Canaanitish nations had undertaken the relief of Samaria, they gave way to the most violent apprehensions, and before the dawn of day could undeceive them they were proceeding with hasty steps towards their own country. In short, adds Josephus, they

* 2 Kings vi. 32, 33.

were in such a dread of this imaginary army that they left their tents and ran together to Ben-hadad, saying that Jehoram the king of Israel had hired for auxiliaries both the Egyptians and the kings of the islands, and was leading them to the attack, for they heard the noise of them as they were coming.

Suspecting that this retreat was a mere stratagem, and meant to draw the Israelites from their walls, the citizens did not immediately commence pursuit. A small body of horsemen was accordingly despatched towards the river Jordan to ascertain that no ambush was formed by the Syrians, the reasons of whose sudden departure were not yet known to the famished garrison. But instead of enemies lying in wait the scouts found the road covered with weapons and stores which they had cast from them in their flight, besides other tokens of the deep consternation with which all ranks amongst them had been seized. No sooner was this intelligence conveyed to the city than the multitude issued forth to satisfy their hunger in the Syrian lines; where they found not only an ample supply of corn, but also a large amount of silver and gold, with all kinds of cattle. Plenty now succeeded to want, and joy took the place of fear and sorrow. The Samaritans triumphed in their easy victory, arrayed themselves in the spoils of the camp, and cherished for a moment the pious conviction that Jehovah was more powerful than the gods of the Gentiles.

A similar sentiment is said to have extended itself to the mind of Ben-hadad, who was impressed with the belief that the confusion and alarm which had occasioned the dispersion of his army was the work of the Divinity and not of man. This painful reflection threw him into a deep melancholy and undermined his health. While he lay dangerously ill he heard that Elisha was on his way to Damascus: whereupon he gave orders that he should be consulted as to

the nature of his distemper, and more particularly with respect to its issue. Hazael, a distinguished officer, was selected for this confidential service ; who, carrying with him a sumptuous present, the best and most precious fruits that the country of Damascus could afford, loaded on forty camels, advanced to meet the man of God. To the question put by the courtier relative to the king's recovery, the answer returned by the prophet was extremely ambiguous. "Thy son Ben-hadad," were the words of Hazael, "hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, 'Thou mayest certainly recover; howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die.'"

This enigmatical reply had a reference to the designs entertained by the royal messenger against his sovereign's life. The prophet fixed his eyes upon the Syrian's countenance to read, as it were, in the changing expression of his features the dark emotions of his heart. Anticipating the evils that would result to his country from the ambition of this bold and unprincipled usurper, the holy man burst into tears. "Why weepeth my Lord?" exclaimed the representative of Ben-hadad, amazed at the effect which their interview had produced upon his feelings. "Because, I know," he returned, "the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel;" and then he proceeded to draw a picture of ferocious cruelty and wanton devastation, the mere imagination of which shook even the firm nerves of Hazael, who declared that he was incapable of ever realizing so horrid a scene. "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do such things?" was his indignant remonstrance to the holy seer who had thought proper to draw aside for a moment the veil of the future. Elisha simply replied, "the Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria;" a fact which accounted for the most unlikely of the occurrences he had predicted, not less than for the

complete change that took place in the principles and feelings of him to whom his prophecy was addressed.*

In due time all that the man of God foretold came to pass. Hazael returned to Damascus and delivered to Ben-hadad the favourable opinion entertained of his case by the prophet; but, "behold, on the morrow he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died." The murderer, whose talents and services had acquired him great popularity, ascended without opposition the empty throne; and it is asserted by Josephus, that both he and the king whom he bereft of life were honoured by the Syrians as gods, because they erected many splendid buildings, and otherwise adorned the city of Damascus.†

But to Jehoram king of Israel the character of the new ruler of Syria appears to have been utterly unknown; for he no sooner learned the death of Ben-hadad than he resolved, in conjunction with his ally the king of Judah, to make another attempt to recover Ramoth in Gilead from the hands of the enemy. A battle ensued in which the Israelitish prince was wounded, in consequence of which he retired to Jezreel, leaving his army under the command of Jehu, the celebrated son of Nimshi, who was destined to be the instrument of the Divine vengeance on the house of Ahab. Ramoth had already fallen to the Israelites, and their army seem to have taken possession of its fortresses, when one of the sons of the prophets sent by Elisha appeared in the presence of the generals soliciting an interview with their leader. "I have an errand to thee, O captain," he exclaimed. "To which of us?" asked Jehu. "Even to thee," was the reply. Having followed the youth to another chamber, he received the message of the prophet, and also the ceremony of anointing which the other was commanded to perform.

* 2 Kings vii. 3—18; viii. 7—15. † Joseph. book ix. chap. 4.

The soldiers, ripe for revolt, made haste to acknowledge the new sovereign. Piling their garments in a heap, agreeably to the practice of eastern nations, as a throne for him to sit on, the officers ordered the trumpets to sound and proclaimed Jehu king.

Meantime Jehoram was at Jezreel, where he had been joined by Ahaziah his relation, who went down to visit him when confined with his wound. Ignorant of what had occurred at Ramoth, the two princes were enjoying an agreeable repose, sweetened by the recollection of their success against the Syrians, when, behold, the sentinel on the tower announced that a party of armed men were approaching at a rapid pace. Immediately the king gave orders to ascertain the cause of this unexpected movement ; but one messenger after another, instead of returning with an explanation, joined the advancing horsemen, till at length the warder could recognise the dress of the soldiers, and that they were led by Jehu in person. Jehoram, impatient to learn the cause which brought the commander of his army to Jezreel, mounted a chariot in company with Ahaziah and went forth to meet him. The devoted monarch was not allowed to remain long in doubt ; for the usurper, after upbraiding him with the wickedness of his father's house and the atrocities chargeable upon his mother, pierced his heart with an arrow. " Let his body," cried Jehu to Bidkar the captain of his chariot, " be thrown into the field of Naboth the Jezreelite, according to the word of the Lord," who burdened his family with this heavy curse. Such proofs of undisguised treason alarmed Ahaziah, who instantly attempted to secure his safety by flight, but lest he should attempt to avenge the fall of his friend the king of Israel, he was pursued by the victorious rebels and put to death.*

* 2 Kings ix. 16, 24, 28.

The fate of Jezebel was not long in suspense. Her bold and ruthless character would have rendered the government of Jehu insecure, independently of the influence she possessed at Jerusalem, where there was equal reason to condemn the recent revolt and to concur in measures for its speedy punishment. The assassin of her son pushed on to Jezreel, in the neighbourhood of which the bloody tragedy had just been completed ; and when she saw him enter the court of the palace she reproached him with the murder of his sovereign, intimating at the same time the retribution which never failed to accompany such crimes. “ Had Zimri peace who slew his master ? ” is a question which contained a happy reference to a similar event terminating in the destruction of him who had brought it to pass. But she seems not to have been aware that her worst enemies were those of her own house, and that the spirit of disaffection which first appeared at Ramoth-Gilead had also penetrated the royal residence at Jezreel. At the command of the new king she was thrown from a window ; her blood sprinkled the wall ; and her body was trodden upon by the horses of his chariot. The neglected corpse, too, was soon assailed by dogs, who left no more of her than the skull, the feet, and the palms of the hands ; a consummation in which the fierce conqueror also recognised the judgment of Heaven as predicted by the prophet Elijah : “ In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel.”

Divine Providence sometimes employs for the correction and improvement of mankind the most odious instruments. The ambition of a remorseless tyrant is used to pull down the strongholds of iniquity, and the selfish passions of the covetous are directed against the sinful dwelling of the rich epicure ; the result in either case answering the double purpose of punishing him who triumphs and him who is subdued. Jehu represented himself as a scourge in the hand of the

Almighty, and it was with evident delight that he smote the guilty ones whom he was commissioned to destroy ; but he executed righteous judgment in an unrighteous manner ; using the name of God for the most flagitious purposes, and covering his own base ends with the pretext of a religious motive.

He had resolved to exterminate the whole house of Ahab, whose descendants were numerous, and might prove troublesome to him. He therefore wrote to the elders or magistrates of Samaria, under whose protection they were, to select the fittest of them for government, to set him on his father's throne, and make ready to defend themselves against all competitors for the royal dignity. This message, however ambiguous in its expression, could not fail to be understood by those who were acquainted with Jehu's character ; and accordingly, though the city was well fortified and supplied with provisions, the guardians of the unfortunate princes came unanimously to the resolution of delivering them up, and of submitting at the same time to the will of the usurper. The terms suggested by the son of Nimshi were the heads of the seventy relatives of Ahab to be laid at his feet on the following day ; and to this barbarous condition the elders found it convenient to comply rather than expose themselves to the resentment of a furious soldier who set no value on human blood. At the dawn of the morning the three score and ten heads were piled in two heaps at the gate of Jezreel ; whereupon Jehu addressed the people, acknowledging that he had conspired against his master and slain him, but insinuating his ignorance as to the fate of the king's progeny, whose remains they now beheld. Concealing the share which he himself had in this horrible murder, he referred the awful occurrence to the inscrutable designs of Providence, whose threatenings against sin were in all cases realized before the lapse of the third or fourth genera-

tion: " Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord which the Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab ; for the Lord hath done that which he spoke by his servant Elijah."

Strengthening himself by the persuasion that he was called to execute the wrath of Jehovah against an idolatrous house, he renewed the havock in Jezreel, where there were still many adherents of that family, kinsfolks, high officers of state, and members of the priesthood. Nor did he confine his bloody career to the kingdom of Israel ; he extended it in like manner to the relations of Ahaziah, forty-two of whom he put to death in the neighbourhood of Samaria as they were going down to visit the children of Jehoram. But the most sanguinary of his exploits was performed upon the priests of Baal, who had met with great encouragement during the late reign. A splendid temple was erected in the capital in honour of that idol, and decorated with many costly ornaments by the hands of the two sovereigns. The ceremonies at the wonted festivals had called forth all the splendour that the wealth of a superstitious monarch could command or the taste of a Sidonian princess could suggest. Jehu expressed his resolution to eclipse by a new magnificence the most gorgeous pageantry that had ever been witnessed under the roof of the god ; declaring to the people that Ahab had only served Baal a little, but that he would serve him much.

Meeting in his way to Samaria Jonadab the son of Rechab, the founder of an Arabian sect celebrated for their abstinence from wine, he invited him to accompany his steps to the city that he might be edified by a striking example of his zeal for Jehovah. The Rechabites, like all the natives of Arabia, were extremely hostile to idolatry, whatever might be its form ; holding it a grievous crime even to make the " likeness of any thing," whether belonging to the earth or the region of the stars. Jehu therefore was well aware that no

sacrifice could be more agreeable to Jonadab than the one he now meditated—a sweeping massacre of all the worshippers of Baal. With this view he announced a solemn festival, and invited to it all the adherents of the Sidonian faith; expressing an earnest desire that none of them should be absent on so important an occasion, and even enforcing his summons with the menace of instant death. In this respect his object was accomplished; the prophets and priests thronged to the metropolis from every part of the kingdom, to enjoy the zealous devotion of the royal convert, “and the house of Baal was full from the one end to the other.” But no sooner were they vested and engaged in preparation for their burnt-offerings, their incense, and sweet music, than a band of armed guards were sent in amongst them, with orders to put every one to the sword. “If,” exclaimed their ferocious master, “any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.” The idol was overturned and broken in pieces; the temple itself was thrown down and converted into a receptacle for nastiness; and the supporters of the contemptible idolatry to which it had been consecrated never again became formidable in Israel.

But Jehu, though he punished others for deviating from the law of Moses, did not himself adhere to its injunctions. Disregarding the precept which commanded every son of Abraham to repair three times in the year to the place where Jehovah had established his name, he worshipped the calves of Bethel and Dan, and in no respect departed from the sins of Jeroboam who made Israel to transgress.

In narrating the events now stated, the inspired historian takes occasion to mention the name of Jonadab the son of Rechab, as concurring with the king in his massacre of the idolatrous priests at Samaria. Except the short account supplied to us in the thirty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah, no

information is communicated in the holy Scripture respecting a body of men who seem to have acted an important part in the domestic history of the Hebrews. It is not distinctly known at what time Rechab lived, nor what was his descent. Some writers, including Theodoret, are of opinion that he was sprung from the tribe of Judah ; whilst others believe that he must have been a priest, or at least a Levite, because it is said in the chapter just quoted, that Jonadab the son of Rechab should not want a man “ to stand before the Lord for ever.” Certain Rabbins are inclined to maintain that the Rechabites had married into the sacerdotal tribes ; that their children were employed in the service of the temple ; and it is, in fact, very generally admitted that they had an occupation within the sacred walls on nearly the same footing as the Gibeonites and Nethenims, who assisted the sons of Aaron in performing the more laborious parts of their duty. In the First Book of Chronicles they are enrolled as families of the Scribes, that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.*

The Kenites were not of the race of Jacob, but of that of Midian the son of Cush. They were descended from Hobab or Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses ; they entered the promised land along with the Hebrews ; and afterwards dwelt in a portion of the territory belonging to the tribe of Judah in the vicinity of the Dead sea. Nor does it appear that they were ever distinguished from the Israelites in any other way than by their decided preference for a rural life, and their contempt of towns, houses, and all the forms of civilized life. Several authors have countenanced the opinion

* 1 Chronicles ii. 55. The Vulgate, without any authority from the Hebrew or Septuagint, translates this verse as follows :—“ Cognationes quoque scribarum habitantium in Jabez, canentes atque resonantes, et in tabernaculis commorantes. Hi sunt Cimai qui venerunt de colore patris domus Rechab.”

that Jethro was the founder of this sect, and that Rechab was one of his names ; that Jonadab the confidant of Jehu was one of his descendants ; and that Heber the Kenite belonged to the same family.*

It is obvious that the ancient Rechabites had the same tastes and principles as the modern Bedouins, who show a similar aversion to a town-life, to the restraints of civilisation, and to the use of wine as an intoxicating beverage. The prohibition to build houses, to plant vineyards, and to sow seed, might be considered as the rule by which the Skenite Arabs continue to regulate their pursuits even at the present day. The usages of the desert, more truly than could be said of the laws of the Medes and Persians, never change ; and as a proof of this assertion it is only necessary to refer to the volumes of the most recent travellers, in which the Arabian shepherd of our own times is seen to represent the habits and customs that prevailed when Abraham sat at his tent-door, and when his grandson watched his herds on the verge of the Syrian wilderness. In like manner we can trace the institute of Jonadab among his progeny during the long space of three hundred years. Near the close of Jehoiakim's reign, when Nebuchadnezzar prepared to lay siege to Jerusalem, the Rechabites were obliged to quit their wonted haunt near the lake Asphaltes, and take refuge within the walls of the holy city. But even at this alarming crisis they did not abandon their practice of living in tents. Amidst the crowded population of Mount Zion and the busy concourse of the inhabitants, intent on the defence of their sacred edifices against the king of Babylon, they found room to pitch their tabernacles after the fashion of their ancestors.

The Rechabites, it is supposed, were carried captive into

* Arias Montanus in *Judic.* Sanctius in *Jerem.* xxxv.

Babylon, after Jerusalem was reduced by the army of the Assyrian monarch. Certain commentators accordingly have discovered in the seventy-first Psalm an expression of their sorrow and resentment : “ Make haste, O God, to deliver me ; make haste to help me, O Lord. Let them be ashamed and confounded that are adversaries to my soul ; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.’ After their return from the long exile on the banks of the Euphrates, they settled in Jabesh-Gilead, a residence to which allusion is made in the Book of Chronicles already cited : and it appears that they resumed their ancient duties in the temple as porters and servants. Nor did they, after all the tribulation they endured under the rod of the Babylonian despot, forget their love of the tent, the emblem of freedom and independence. After the heavy years of the captivity had rolled by, the sons of Jonadab were seen living after the manner of their kinsmen in the desert, stretching the flexible covering over their heads, and trusting for food and clothing to the milk and wool of their flocks. But their name soon afterwards fell into oblivion. Scripture presents no traces of them subsequently to their establishment at Jabesh : and though profane history undertakes to mark some steps in their progress towards that oblivion into which, owing to the want of native writers, the affairs of the whole Jewish people were soon precipitated, we cannot rely upon the accuracy of its statements.

It is imagined, for example, that the Assideans, of whom mention is made in the First Book of the Maccabees, were the successors of the Rechabites ; whilst other writers, not less entitled to our respect, are disposed to identify them with the Essenes, a Jewish sect who at a later period obtained no small celebrity. But if, as is generally believed, the Assideans and the Essenes were the same order of teachers, it follows that the former ought not to be con-

founded with the offspring of Jonadab, because their habits were entirely different. Unlike the children of Rechab, they cultivated fields, the produce of which they reaped in common ; they dwelt in houses after the same manner with the rest of their countrymen ; they had neither wives nor children,—an encumbrance they held to be inconsistent with their duty as professors of a refined religion ; and they refused to unite with the other Jews in observing the usual ceremonies in the temple of Jerusalem.

Perhaps we might be justified in asserting that the peculiarities of the Rechabites, excepting their attachment to the ritual law, may all be referred to the indigenous habits of nomadic tribes. It was on a foundation in many respects similar that Mohammed erected his system municipal and moral, including abstinence from wine, and the love of personal freedom amidst the simplicity of a pastoral life. The rural Arab, untainted by the indulgences incident to the dwellers in towns, and despising the effeminacy, the servitude, and the tame spirit of his agricultural brethren, differs very little from the Rechabite in the days of Jehu and of Jeremiah the prophet.

While the new king of Israel employed his zeal in rooting out the family of Ahab, Athaliah, the cruel mother of the deceased prince, shed with equal profusion the blood of her own house. During the reign of her son she had enjoyed the pleasure of supreme power ; and when he was cut off, she resolved to secure the sceptre which she thought herself more competent to wield than the just heir of the crown. With this view she gave orders to put to death all the seed royal, thereby removing every claim which might disturb her repose, or impede the course of her government. One of her grandchildren alone escaped, the infant Joash, who was still in the bosom of his nurse. Jehosheba, sister of the late king,

and wife of the high-priest Jehoiada, conveyed the child into the temple, where he was brought up with great care until it was deemed proper to introduce him to the people as their rightful sovereign. Athaliah meanwhile reigned as absolute queen ; revived the worship of Baal in the great house which she had built in honour of that idol ; and laboured incessantly to depress the interests of the true religion as administered by the servants of Jehovah.

At length, six years having passed since the house of Judah had fallen under the hand of the daughter of Jezebel, the pontiff revealed his secret to some of the principal officers of state. The priests and Levites formed themselves into bands, secured the approaches of the temple as well as the avenues to the palace ; and, issuing arms to their faithful adherents, they proclaimed Joash, the son of Ahaziah, the legitimate successor to the throne of David. Athaliah, informed of the unusual assembly which crowded the courts of the Lord's house, and hearing the shouts of the multitude crying God save the King, repaired thither in person to inquire into the reason ; but she no sooner entered the gates than she beheld the young monarch in royal robes, a crown on his head, and surrounded by a large military force. " And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king ; and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets. And Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, treason !" The measure of her iniquity, however, was now full, and her doom fixed. She was allowed indeed to retire from the sacred enclosure, that her blood might not desecrate holy ground, but before she could reach the palace she was overtaken and slain. The idolatrous worship which she had patronized was also put down ; the fane of Baal was demolished ; the chief-priest of that superstition was put to death before his altar ; and the adorers of the

sun and moon were assailed with deep disgrace throughout all the land of Israel.*

The government was for some time conducted by the venerable Jehoiada, whose whole life had been devoted to the welfare of the national religion and the prosperity of the house of David. No sooner, however, was his pupil equal to the duties which belonged to his high station than he was invested with full power ; the high-priest thinking it enough to tender his advice, and to guide the mind of his young sovereign through those difficulties which have ever been found inseparable from the kingly office, in all countries where the inhabitants are divided as to the proper mode of offering their veneration to the great Creator. The first object which attracted his regard was the dilapidated condition of the temple. During the ascendancy of Ahab's influence in Israel, and more especially during his daughter's sway on the throne of Judah, the precepts of the Levitical law were lightly esteemed ; the worship of the true God at Jerusalem fell into neglect ; and the sources whence the ecclesiastical establishment was maintained were gradually diverted from their proper channel.

* 2 Kings xi. 13—18.—It is perhaps not unworthy of being noticed, that Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah, and aunt of the young king Joash, was not the daughter of Athaliah. She was the daughter of Jehoram by another wife or concubine.

“ Some interpreters are of opinion that Joash was not the real son of Ahaziah (in whom the race of Solomon in a direct line was extinct), but properly the son of Nathanael, and only called Ahaziah's because he succeeded him on the throne : For had he been Ahaziah's true son, and Athaliah's grandson, why might she not have declared him king, and during his minority at least taken the administration into her own hands ? But the historians record her cruelty, as they say, in destroying the princes related to Ahaziah, because she was unwilling to have the kingdom go into another branch of David's family. But, notwithstanding these reasons and the authority of those who produce them, in the Second Book of Kings and Chronicles we find this Joash so frequently called the son of Ahaziah, and the king's son, without any restriction, that we cannot be persuaded to look out for any other father for him.”—*Stackhouse*, vol. ii. p. 353, quarto edition.

To repair the evils that had been inflicted during a succession of corrupted rulers, Joash earnestly recommended the renewal of the tax which was imposed by Moses for discharging the necessary expenses connected with sacred things. The people, long unaccustomed to this payment, did not contribute without reluctance ; and being unwilling to enforce a law now viewed as obsolete, the king, listening to the sage counsel of Jehoiada, converted the impost into a voluntary gift. In this form a large amount was raised, which, from a supposed delay attending the disbursement, or from some inaccuracy in the mode of accounting for the several sums, brought a cloud of suspicion upon the priesthood. At length an expedient was devised to prevent the possibility of undue appropriation, and to remove all grounds of jealousy on the part of those who replenished the treasury ; after which the offerings proved quite sufficient for renewing the consecrated edifice in a manner worthy of its original grandeur, and to provide at the same time such sacred vessels as might replace those abstracted or profaned by the idolatrous Athaliah.

After the demise of the high-priest, who lived to the advanced age of a hundred and thirty, Joash gave ear to less experienced advisers, and departed from the covenant made by him at his accession, and by which he bound himself together with his people to be the Lord's, and to perpetuate the worship of Jehovah in his land. Seduced by unprincipled retainers, he followed their wicked courses until the bent of his passions hurried him into the open profession of idolatry. Irritated rather than convinced by the admonitions of the prophets, he in the end refused to give them a hearing ; and to deliver himself from the importunate remonstrances of Zecharias, the companion of his childhood, and son of the late pontiff, he gave his consent that he should be murdered. " Thus Joash the king remembered not the kind-

ness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son : and when he died, he said, *The Lord look upon it, and require it.*"

The last words of the martyred priest were not sent up to heaven in vain. Hazael, the ambitious, warlike, and fortunate king of Syria, had already proved the sharpness of his weapons on the Israelites, under their active leader, the usurper Jehu. After gaining several battles he deprived them of their extensive territory eastward of the Jordan, the rich lands of Gad and Gilead, the inheritance of the tribes of Reuben and Manasseh. At this juncture, when the seeds of disunion and weakness were sown among the children of Judah, he directed his victorious troops towards their border ; and crossing the river which formed the proper boundary of the holy land, he advanced to Jerusalem without encountering any material opposition. Joash in fact was in no respect prepared to resist so powerful an invader ; he therefore resolved, in order to avert the miseries of a siege, to purchase the retreat of an army which he had not the courage to encounter in the field. He seized the rich vessels of gold and silver in the temple, whether devoted by his ancestors, or recently deposited there by himself, and adding to them all the treasure he could command, sent the gift to Hazael, and entreated him to retire from his kingdom. The Syrian, aware that the public wealth of Jerusalem was now exhausted, had no longer any object to persevere in his expedition. He consented to withdraw his soldiers, flushed with a succession of easy victories ; but he meant not that the pusillanimous prince should enjoy a long season of tranquillity, having marked him and his effeminate nobles for an easy prey. In the opening of the following year, accordingly, the hosts of Syria appeared once more under the walls of Jerusalem, and after defeating the forces which Joash sent against them, entered the gates and put the city to military

execution. These disasters excited a conspiracy against the king, when two of his own officers slew him in his bed.*

Joash was succeeded on the throne by his son Amaziah, who reigned well for a season. He began his administration by punishing with death his father's murderers, but tempered his severity agreeably to an injunction in the Mosaical law which forbids the penalty due to parents from being extended to their children. To recover the revolted kingdom of the Edomites, he raised three hundred thousand men in Judah, and still farther to increase his formidable array he hired a hundred thousand Israelites. This alliance, however, with an idolatrous state was condemned by a man of God, who assured the king, if he carried such auxiliaries into the field, that the frown of Heaven would darken his counsels and defeat his plans. Amaziah therefore consented to lose at once the hundred talents of silver with which he had bought their services, and the friendship of the warriors themselves who deeply felt the disgrace of being dismissed. His success against Edom made it manifest that, in his preparations for the campaign, he had adopted wise measures, and that the diminution of numbers in an army does not always weaken its strength. A battle was fought in the valley of Salt, which terminated in favour of Judah. But in this case, as in many others familiar to the reader of sacred history, victory was more hurtful to the monarch than defeat. Among the spoils which he took from the children of Esau there were carved or molten images of so rare a workmanship that his heart was captivated by their form, and he conveyed them to his own land to be set up as objects of religious veneration. "It came to pass, after he was returned from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his

* 2 Kings xii. 20. 2 Chronicles xxiv. 25.

gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burnt incense unto them." From that moment the tide of fortune turned against him, for he had provoked the Lord to anger. A prophet was sent to reprove him, and he resented the faithful admonition.—"Art thou made of the king's counsel?" he exclaimed. "Forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel."*

The Israelites who had been sent back by Amaziah attacked on their march towards Samaria some towns belonging to Judah, and carried off much plunder. The king, on his return from the expedition against Edom, expressed his resentment at this violation of the treaty on the part of Jehoash; and failing to obtain satisfaction from the grandson of Jehu, he challenged him to decide the dispute in the field of battle. The latter, undismayed by his vaunting language, made the following reply:—"The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites, and thine heart lifteth thee up to boast: abide now at home; why shouldest thou meddle to thine hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?" This sarcastic expostulation was not calculated to sooth the anger of Amaziah. He marched out at the head of his army to meet the king of Israel, by whom he was soon afterwards defeated with great loss, and led to Jerusalem, his own metropolis, a prisoner in the train of his victorious rival. The holy city was stripped once more of its treasures by the conqueror, who consented to receive them in name of ransom for his captive; though to mark his

* 1 Chronicles xxv. 15, 16.

triumph over the descendants of David he levelled part of the wall before he returned to his own land.

The remainder of Amaziah's reign does not present any thing remarkable either in foreign or domestic policy. He out-lived Jehoash fifteen years, after which he became like his father the victim of a conspiracy among his own servants. Being made aware of his danger in the capital, he fled to Lachish, whither he was pursued and put to death, leaving the crown to his son Azariah, a youth of sixteen, who is better known in sacred history under the name of Uzziah. The early part of his government was adorned by his personal piety, and rewarded with a prosperity almost uninterrupted. He defeated the Arabians, Philistines, and other hordes of the desert ; having at the same time reduced the Ammonites so low as to compel them to pay tribute. The main fruit of his conquests was the recovery of Elath, the celebrated port on the Red sea. He could call into the field more than three hundred thousand well-armed men ; he fortified Jerusalem, built strongholds, invented ingenious machines and instruments of war, founded extensive magazines, and, with a view to the benefit of all, encouraged the operations of agriculture. "The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour were two thousand and six hundred. And Uzziah prepared for his men throughout all the host, shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones ; and his name spread far abroad ; for he was marvellously helped till he was strong."

But the historian who describes his power and greatness has also to record the fatal effects of a successful ambition. So long as he submitted himself to the wise counsels of the prophet, his measures were judicious and his actions pros-

perous. Nor did he, like some of his predecessors, ruin his affairs by an attachment to idolatry or neglect of the true religion ; on the contrary, he was led into transgression by an excessive but ill-directed zeal for the honour of Jehovah, to whose worship he resolved to devote his personal exertions. Impelled by this mistaken motive he invaded the sacerdotal office, which, though in other nations it was seen blended with the regal functions, was expressly kept separate in the Jewish economy. He entered the temple to burn incense ; and, notwithstanding the expostulations of the high-priest, he persisted in his rash intrusion until he was suddenly smitten with the leprosy which not only drove him from the sanctuary but from his throne. “ And Uziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the Lord.”

He was succeeded by Jotham his son, who for sixteen years supported the regal dignity with some distinction and exercised its authority for the welfare of his people. He acted as regent during the seven years that his parent lingered under the incurable disease of which he died ; “ He was,” says the Scripture, “ over the house, judging the people of the land.” He maintained or recovered the ascendancy which his father had established over the Ammonites, who continued throughout his reign to acknowledge themselves tributaries. Nor was his attention confined to the pursuits of war and the gratification of his ambition ; for it is recorded of him that he repaired the sanctuary and built cities in various parts of his dominions. At length, after attaining the forty-first year of a life unstained by any great offence, and distinguished by more than the ordinary share of glory that fell to Jewish kings, he left the throne to his son Ahaz, whose reputation does not stand so high in the annals of his country.

We now return to the affairs of Israel, to which we have not more than adverted since the death of Jehu, the founder of a new dynasty. This active but inhuman prince bequeathed the sceptre, which he had purchased at the expense of much treason and blood, to his heir Jehoahaz, who, imitating the vices which dishonoured his house, was punished, as has been already mentioned, by the arms of Hazael, whose victories made deep encroachments on the transjordanic provinces of the Israelites. Suffering in this case brought repentance and peace. “And Jehoahaz besought the Lord, and the Lord hearkened unto him; for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them: neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen.”

At this lowest pitch of depression did Jehoash or Joash assume the government of Samaria. The young king, instructed by the misfortunes of his predecessors, resolved to cleave to Jehovah and honour his servant Elisha. This holy man, who was now drawing near the end of his earthly career, received a visit from his sovereign; on which occasion the dying prophet told him to take “bow and arrows” and open the windows eastward and shoot. He obeyed, and was told he should smite the Syrians at Aphek. He then directed him to take the arrows and smite upon the ground: the king smote thrice. Elisha was grieved that he had not repeated the blows more frequently, and foretold that he should only prevail against Syria three times.*

The death of Hazael, whose name had been a terror to the Hebrew nations, enabled Jehoash to realize the prediction of the prophet. Ben-hadad, who ascended the Syrian throne, though not less hostile to Israel and Judah, was so deficient in the military talent which distinguished his fa-

ther, that he had the mortification to see most of his conquests torn from him. Various battles ensued, in three of which the Samaritan prince gained a complete triumph, and was thereby put into a capacity of retaking the chief towns belonging to his people in Gad and Gilead. We have already described the ground of his quarrel with Amaziah, king of Judah, who foolishly defied him, and the victory which he obtained in the field of Beth-shemesh, where the lion of David fled before the leopards of the house of Jehu; events which, when viewed in connection with his successful war against Syria, confirm the impression that Jehoash, besides his respect for the religion of his country, must have possessed great abilities as a military leader.

Having restored the affairs of his kingdom, he left at his demise to his son Jeroboam, the second of that name, an easy and prosperous administration. In truth, the two states of Israel and Judah, long humbled by the Syrians, began at this period to recover their ancient preponderance. Jeroboam in particular sustained the reputation which his father had acquired. He waged war with great success, and extended his frontiers from the city of Hamath on the north to the Dead sea on the south, thereby realizing once more the limits assigned by Joshua when he conquered the native princes of Canaan. Even Damascus, the Syrian capital, surrendered to his forces. These conquests were the fruit of a great victory gained by this sovereign over the arms of Ben-hadad who had provoked him to hostilities: a success which was rendered memorable in the annals of Israel by the fact that it had been foretold by the prophet Jonas.*

But Jeroboam was not faultless with respect to the pre-

* "He restored the coast of Israel, from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher." 2 Kings xiv. 25.

vailing sin of his house, the adoration of idols, and even the encouragement of foreign superstition. His pride, moreover, and presumption were offensive alike to Heaven and to his own subjects; and thus, while he was acquiring glory abroad, he was also unconsciously giving birth at home to those fierce passions which ultimately shook the foundations of his government and hastened the ruin of his people. His reign therefore was succeeded by a wild anarchy, the immediate cause and duration of which have not been accurately ascertained. An interregnum of eleven years, according to some authors, and of twenty-two, according to others, followed the demise of Jeroboam; nor was it until 771 B. C. that his son Zechariah obtained the sceptre.

His administration was limited to the short period of six months, for he was put to death by Shallum, the son of Jabesh, who conspired against him. The murdered prince was the last of the house of Jehu, whose zeal in the suppression of idolatry was rewarded by the promise that his descendants should occupy the throne to the fourth generation. The death of Zechariah was revenged by Menahem, the chief captain of his army; but it was to promote his own ambitious views rather than to serve the cause of justice. From Tirzah, where he received notice of the conspiracy against his master, he proceeded with rapid steps to Samaria, which could not resist the force under his command; and, having secured the person of the usurper, he deprived him at once of life and of the crown. By vigorous measures he repressed every attempt that was made to disturb his administration. Tiphshah, a city which ventured to shut its gates when he approached it, was after an obstinate siege taken by storm and immediately subjected to all the horrors of military execution. His cruelty and oppression rendered him odious to the Israelites, over whom he ruled with a rod of iron not less than ten years; at the end of

which he was replaced on the throne by his son Pekahiah, who, after a reign of twenty-three months, was assassinated at a feast, together with his principal officers, by Pekah the general of his horse, and son of Remaliah. This successful traitor held the government twenty years, more dreaded for his power than respected for his talents, which appear to have been considerable.*

It was in the seventeenth year of Pekah that Ahaz ascended the throne of Judah, after the wise though not very eventful reign of his father Jotham. The two Hebrew kingdoms were now fast approaching a crisis which perhaps no degree of prudence could have long prevented, but it was certainly hastened by the unhappy dissensions that prevailed between them. The power of Assyria under Pul, whose capital was the celebrated Nineveh, had already made itself felt in the time of Menahem, who seems at first to have invited his assistance, and afterwards to have purchased his retreat. The Israelites in fact were treated by this haughty monarch like a conquered people; for he demanded from them a heavy tribute which could not be raised except by the severest exactions. A thousand talents of silver, amounting to about £400,000, entailed a tax of fifty shekels on every man who was considered to belong to the class denominated wealthy. Such a sacrifice on the part of the "mighty men" who dwelt in Samaria showed not less distinctly the weakness of Menahem than the overwhelming strength of his ally or antagonist, who had apparently resolved not to tolerate the existence of any independent state between the Euphrates and the shores of Tyre.

The unsteady government of Ahaz afforded to Pekah a

* Josephus (book ix. chap. xi.) says that Shallum, son of Jabesh, kept the government only thirty days. This agrees sufficiently with the Scriptural account that he "began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria." 2 Kings xv. 13.

good opportunity to extend his dominions at the expense of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. With this object in view he invited Rezin king of Syria to join him in an expedition against the Jewish monarch, who was quite unprepared to repel the slightest inroad if suddenly effected. The result answered so far the expectation of the confederates that they found some of the open towns an easy prey, whence they carried into their own country a large quantity of spoil. Irritated by this unprovoked assault Ahaz determined to avenge the cause of his people on the Israelites, so soon as the combined armies should separate. He accordingly marched to attack Pekah, when a bloody battle was fought between the kindred nations, which ended in the total discomfiture of the king of Judah. A hundred and twenty thousand of his bravest men were cut in pieces, two hundred thousand individuals of both sexes and of every age were taken prisoners, who, together with a load of plunder, were driven by the conqueror to Samaria. On the same fatal day Ahaz lost his eldest son, who was slain by Zichri, a valiant chief of the Israelites, and several others of the most distinguished persons in his court, especially Azrikam, the governor of the house of Elkanah, who was "next to the king."

The desolation of Judah seemed now as complete as the triumph of their enemies could make it, when the Almighty moved the prophet Obad to intercede for the vanquished. His pleading in their behalf was so eloquent that every feeling of rivalry and hatred was subdued in the breasts of the conquerors; in the miserable captives who crowded their streets they recognised their brethren; they refused to retain them in bondage; they made haste to supply food and clothing, to mitigate the sufferings of the wounded, and to provide for all of them the means of returning home. "Behold," said the benevolent Levite, "because the Lord God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into

your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up unto heaven. And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bond-men and bond-women unto you: but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God? Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren; for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you. So the armed men left the captives and the spoil; and they clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm-trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria.*

This lenity neither soothed the resentment of Ahaz nor removed his fears. He knew well that the king of Assyria would readily lend him aid, influenced by the desire, which could no longer be concealed, of reducing the power of Damascus and Israel, and of finally subjecting all the Syrian states to the dominion of Nineveh. He therefore collected all the treasure that yet remained in Jerusalem, and sent it to Tiglath-pileser, imploring his succour against Pekah and Rezin, and acknowledging himself the vassal of the great monarch of western Asia. To this desperate measure, which could not fail to secure a permanent ascendancy for the Assyrian empire, he was farther impelled by a revolt of the Edomites and Philistines, and by the loss of Elath,—a place, indeed, which was now valuable only as a relic of national greatness, and as a memorial of the prosperity still associated with the brilliant age of David and Solomon.

The sovereign of Nineveh lent a favourable ear to the solicitations of Ahaz, and proceeded with a strong force

* 2 Chronicles xxviii. 9—16.

against Rezin, whom he soon deprived of his capital, and at no distant period of his crown and territory. Syria ceased to exist as an independent kingdom ; the restless ally of Pekah was put to death, and his people carried away captive into lands beyond the Euphrates. In this conquest, Tiglath-pileser was merely accomplishing his own purposes ; and he left the king of Judah to an unequal conflict with the nations of the south, the Philistines and Idumeans, who had invaded the cities of the low country, and had taken Beth-shemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shocho with the dependent villages, and dwelt in them. The sacred historian accordingly remarks with great truth, that the Assyrian came unto him and distressed him, but strengthened him not. He took possession of all the country eastward of the river Jordan ; then he subdued Galilee ; and returning by Jerusalem he claimed a right to the whole treasury, whether sacred or common, as a suitable compensation for the expenses of the war. This alliance, in short, served only to exhaust the inhabitants of Judea, and to give them for a neighbour the powerful king of Nineveh, the full weight of whose arms they were afterwards doomed to experience.

In former reigns, the pressure of adversity usually brought the prince to reflection, and weaned him from his idolatrous attachments. But Ahaz proved neither so docile nor so pious ; for, upon going to Damascus to pay homage to the conqueror, he saw an altar which pleased his fancy, and concluding that the gods of the north were more propitious to their votaries than Jehovah was to the descendants of Abraham, he ordered one to be constructed at Jerusalem on the same plan. He in fact revolted entirely from the national faith, and served the idols of Syria. No superstition was too cruel for him ; he offered incense in the valley of Hinnom, and made his own children pass through the fire to Moloch. Had not his death relieved his people, the

temple of Jerusalem would have been desecrated and abandoned ; a heathenish worship would have been substituted for the rites of the Mosaical law ; and the kingdom of Solomon would have been plunged into all the iniquity of the house of Jeroboam.

Having reached the epoch which marks the decline of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the narrative now merges in the learned work of Dr Prideaux, whose volumes begin at the reign of Ahaz and of Pekah who forced his way to the throne of Samaria. The community of the Ten Tribes, viewed as a regal state, did not long survive the fall of Damascus. The able but unprincipled son of Remaliah was assassinated at the instigation, it is believed, of Hoshea who afterwards succeeded him. But in the mean time another anarchy or interregnum ensued, which aggravated the symptoms of the political distemper under which the nation was seen to labour. Ten years were spent in the midst of the most violent agitations, whereby the minds of men were so much divided that hardly any share of patriotism remained to avert the calamities with which the commonwealth was threatened. At length Hoshea seized the reins of government ; but his ability was so inferior to his ambition that his foolish measures only tended to accelerate the crisis which the better part of his subjects began to consider inevitable. Shalmaneser, who now wielded the power of Assyria, had adopted the views of his predecessor with regard to the feeble kingdoms on his western frontier. He meant to incorporate them with his own vast dominions ; but so long as they payed tribute and acknowledged his superiority as the lord paramount, he consented that they should retain a nominal independence.

Hoshea, desirous to throw off a yoke at once so galling and disgraceful, entered into a correspondence with Egypt, the sovereign of which at that period is known in Scripture by

the name of So, though he is recognised in profane history and the catalogue of Manetho under the designation of Sevechus. No sooner was this intrigue detected by the vigilant eye of the Assyrian than he ordered his troops to advance upon Samaria, resolved to punish a dependant so unworthy of his confidence. Three years were wasted in the siege, which was accompanied with great suffering on both sides; but at length the assailants prevailed, threw down the walls, made the king a prisoner, and removed nearly the whole of his people into the Median and Persian provinces. Hoshea himself was carried in chains to Nineveh, where he appears to have lingered out his days, as no mention is afterwards made of him either in the Bible or by Josephus who records with much minuteness the events of this memorable period.*

About forty years after the taking of Samaria by Shalmaneser, the monarch then on the throne of Assyria, called in the sacred history Esarhaddon, commanded a census to be made of the conquered kingdom, in order that all the families who had escaped the first captivity might be sent to the same distant lands whither their brethren had been relegated. New colonies were brought from the east to supply their place in the inheritance of the Ten Tribes; by which means the name of Israel was soon extinguished throughout all the country given to their fathers under the sanction of Jehovah. At Halah and Habor, cities of the Medes on the river Gozan, the children of Ephraim, Reuben, and Manassch, endured a weary exile, persecuted and despised, till in the course of ages their lineage perished from off the earth, and their families disappeared even in the regions where the conqueror had planted them.

* 2 Kings xvii. 4. "And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year; therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison."

These events, according to the Jewish annalist, took place nine hundred and forty-seven years after their forefathers were come out of the land of Egypt ; eight hundred years from the time that Joshua was their leader ; and two hundred and forty years seven months and seven days after they had revolted from Rehoboam, the grandson of David, and had given the kingdom to his rival. Such a conclusion he adds, overtook the Israelites when they had transgressed the laws of God, and would not hearken to the prophets who foretold that this calamity would come upon them if they did not depart from their evil ways.*

The Assyrians were employed by Divine Providence as the instrument for punishing the rebellious sons of Jacob, according to a principle of retribution clearly explained to their ancestors. Their inspired legislator declared to them that if they failed to reverence the holy statutes delivered from Mount Sinai, defeat and captivity should scatter them over the face of the earth, and make them strangers in the good land which was promised to Abraham the founder of their nation. “ The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies, and he shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known ; and there shalt thou become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth ; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand ; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young : and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end

* Book ix. chap. 14.

of the earth even unto the other ; and there shalt thou serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest : but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And it shall come to pass, that, as the Lord has rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you ; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought : and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.”*

The vast accession of power obtained by the Assyrian empire at the beginning of the eighth century before the christian era, threatened the independence of all the neighbouring states. The small communities which owned the sovereignty of Damascus were swallowed up, one after another, in the immense vortex now opening around them ; and those which were unwilling to yield themselves to so miserable a fate, turned their eyes towards Egypt for protection. The monarchy of the Pharaohs was indeed the only one at that period, westward of the Syrian desert, which could venture to measure its strength with the government of Nineveh ; and being apprehensive that, were the Hebrew tribes subdued, the ambition of the great king might extend to the banks of the Nile, the Egyptians required little solicitation to engage in hostilities against him. It therefore became the principal object of consideration with the politicians of Jerusalem and Samaria, whether to purchase the forbearance of Pul, Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, and Sennacherib, or to court the alliance of the princes of On and Memphis. To the Jews, it is recorded, Egypt generally proved a broken reed, which so far from giving support wounded the hand that leant upon it ; and hence the prophets

* Deut. xxviii. 25—65.

were usually heard recommending submission to the Chaldeans, rather than a confederacy with a distant people whose help could not avail. At length, when Palestine and Syria could no longer be defended by the native armies, it became obvious that the fine country which stretches from the Mediterranean to the edge of the wilderness would be the reward of the conqueror, whether he proceeded from the Nile or the Euphrates; and also that the Egyptians and Assyrians would soon afterwards come to blows in their own quarrel, to determine which of them should exercise the supreme rule on the Red sea, the shores of Tyre, and along the borders of western Asia.

The chronology of the period now described, though subject to the uncertainty incident to all dates prior to the Grecian Olympiads, does not admit of much variation. From the accession of Saul down to the conquest of Israel and Judah there is little difference of opinion as to the sum of the reigns; the extreme points in both cases being ascertained on principles which do not leave any room for hypothetical discussion. The results, indeed, possess not the same uniformity if extended back to the era which terminates at the death of Eli, when the Hebrew commonwealth was about to change its form, and pass through the administration of Samuel into the regal government. A recent author, whose learning secures for his opinion the highest respect, calls in question the arguments upon which the system of dates recommended by the Septuagint-version of the Old Testament has been usually supported. Without adopting entirely the numbers of the modern Hebrew text, he gives nevertheless an undue weight to the objections which have been urged against the principles of the calculation used by the Greek translators, as well as by Demetrius, Eupolemus, Josephus, and the fathers of the christian church. But his conclusions do not rest upon any irra-

tional attachment to the prejudices of the Masoretic Jews ; for, departing from the reasonings of the school of Tiberias, he adds sixty years to the interval between the Flood and the birth of Abraham, and acknowledges that six hundred and twelve may have elapsed between the exode of the Israelites and the foundation of Solomon's temple.*

According to Mr Clinton, the succession of the kings who occupied the thrones of Israel and Judah stands as follows :—

| JUDAH. | | | ISRAEL. | | |
|------------------|--------|-------|------------------|--------|-------|
| | YEARS. | B. C. | | YEARS. | B. C. |
| Rehoboam reigned | 17 | 976 | Jeroboam reigned | 22 | 976 |
| Abijah | 3 | 954 | | | |
| Asa | 41 | 956 | Nadab | 2 | 955 |
| | | | Baasha | 24 | 953 |
| | | | Elah | 2 | 930 |
| | | | Omri | 12 | 926 |
| Jehoshaphat | 24 | 915 | Ahab | 22 | 919 |
| | | | Ahaziah | 2 | 896 |
| Jehoram | 7 | 891 | Jehoram | 12 | 895 |
| Ahaziah | 1 | 884 | | | |
| Athaliah | 6 | 883 | Jehu | 28 | 883 |
| | | | Jehoahaz | 17 | 855 |

* *Fasti Hellenici*. The Civil and Literary Chronology of Greece, from the earliest Accounts to the Death of Augustus. By Henry Fynes Clinton, Esq. M.A., late student of Christ Church. Vol. i. p. 283—329.

Mr Clinton thinks that “ the first translators of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek had a very obvious motive for enlarging the Chronology. The Chaldeans and Egyptians (whose histories were about that time published by Berosus and Manetho) laid claim to a remote antiquity. Hence the translators of the Pentateuch into Greek might be led to augment the amount of the generations by the centenary additions, and by the interpolation of the second *Cainan*, in order to carry back the epochs of the creation and of the flood to a period more conformable with the high pretensions of the Egyptians and Chaldeans.”

But how trifling was the addition of six or seven centuries when compared to the reigns of the gods and demigods of Egypt and Babylon, who exercised dominion more than 36,000 years !

| | YEARS. | B. C. | | YEARS. | B. C. |
|----------|--------|-----------|--------------|----------|-------|
| Joash | 40 | 887 | Jehoash | 16 | 839 |
| Amaziah | 29 | 837 | Jeroboam II. | 41 | 823 |
| Uzziah | 52 | 808 (May) | Interregnum | 11 | 783 |
| | | | Zachariah | 6 months | 771 |
| | | | Shallum | 1 month | — |
| | | | Menahem | 10 years | 770 |
| Jotham | 15 | 756 | Pekaiah | 2 | 759 |
| | | | Pekah | 20 | 757 |
| Ahaz | 15 | 741 | Interregnum | 9 | 738 |
| Hezekiah | 29 | 726 | Hoshea | 9 | 730 |

The extent of the period between the death of Josiah and the destruction of the temple is determined by comparing the history of Zedekiah and Jehoiakin with the dates assigned to the Babylonian kings by the Astronomical Canon. For example, says he, “the 37th year of Jehoiakin’s captivity on the 25th day of the 12th month fell within the first year of Evil-Merodach. This 25th day of the 12th month was in reference to the months of the Hebrew year, and marked the month of February. But as the 1st of Evil-Merodach was dated from January 11 B. C. 561, this would be February B. C. 561. And as Zedekiah began to reign about June, the captivity of Jehoiakin necessarily commenced in June, and consequently his 37th year in June B. C. 562, since it was still current in February following. But if his 37th year commenced in June B. C. 562, his captivity is fixed to June B. C. 598; the 11th year of Zedekiah was completed in June B. C. 587, and the month *Ab* in which the temple was destroyed was in July B. C. 587.” This conclusion refutes the date of Usher B. C. 588 for the burning of the temple, because if this event had occurred in that year, the 37th of Jehoiakin’s captivity would have commenced in June B. C. 563, and the 12th month and 25th day would have fallen in February B. C. 562; that is, before the accession of Evil-Merodach. Again, it refutes

the date of Jackson and Hales B. C. 586, because in that case the 37th year would have commenced in June B. C. 561, and February of that 37th year would have fallen in B. C. 560, which would rather belong to the second year of Evil-Merodach.

The captivity of Zedekiah being determined to June B. C. 587, the accession of Rehoboam, 389 years one month before, is fixed to May B. C. 976; and, according to this author, we ascend from thence to the dates of all the preceding epochs, as exhibited in the following table :—

| B. C. | A. M. | | YEARS. |
|-------|-------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| 4138 | | Adam | 1656 |
| 2182 | 1656 | The Deluge | 352 |
| 2130 | 2008 | Birth of Abraham | 75 |
| 2055 | 2083 | The Call | 430 |
| 1625 | 2513 | The Exode | 40 |
| 1585 | 2553 | Death of Moses | 27 |
| 1558 | 2580 | First Servitude | 130 |
| 1128 | 3010 | Death of Eli | 32 |
| 1096 | 3042 | Election of Saul (May or June) | 40 |
| 1056 | 3082 | David (40 years 6 months) | 40 |
| 1016 | 3122 | Solomon (39 years 6 months) | 40 |
| 976 | 3162 | Rehoboam (May) | 389 1 month |

This outline exhibits the leading principles of Mr Clinton's Scripture Chronology, by which, it will be observed, he extends the duration of the world 134 years beyond the amount admitted into the authorized version of the Bible. In other respects the deviations from Usher do not seem to merit any particular attention, as they involve not any theoretical assumptions likely to disturb the settled notions of the reader on this interesting subject.

There are, however, some observations on the fall of the Assyrian empire and the taking of Nineveh, which, with reference to the opinions of Prideaux, lay claim to a more par-

ticular notice. The learned Dean of Norwich held the belief that the Assyrian monarchy was dissolved B. C. 747; in which conclusion he followed Archbishop Usher, who maintained that in the year now mentioned “the conspirators took the city and proclaimed Arbaces for their king,—and so the kingdom of Assyria came to destruction. The kingdom therefore now falling to be divided, Arbaces having freed his countrymen the Medes from the Assyrian yoke, enabled them to live in after-times according to their own laws, as Herodotus affirmeth. Belesis, who in Holy Writ is called Baladan, but by Ptolemæus is called Nabonassar, held the kingdom of Babylon fourteen years.” Prideaux expresses himself in similar terms, stating that the empire of the Assyrians, which had governed Asia for thirteen hundred years, being dissolved by the death of Sardanapalus, there arose up two empires, the one founded by Arbaces, the other by Belesis. Belesis had Babylon, Chaldea, and Arabia, and Arbaces all the rest. “This,” he adds, “happened in B. C. 747. Arbaces in Scripture is Tiglath-pileser, Belesis is the same with Nabonassar, and in the Holy Scripture Baladan.”*

But it appears from the inspired portion of the Old Testament, as well as from the apocryphal book of Tobit, that the Medes were dependent upon Nineveh after the period now specified; and hence it is justly concluded that the able writers whose works are now referred to were led into error by Ctesias, who applied to Arbaces and Belesis things which obviously related to the destruction of Nineveh and of the Assyrian kingdom, by Cyaxares the Mede, and Nabopolassar, prefect of Babylon. The dates of Prideaux, Mr Clinton farther remarks, are inconsistent with his own state-

* *Usarii Annal. Vet. Testamenti*, p. 86—99. *Prideaux's Sacred and Profane History Connected*, vol. i. p. 1.

ments ; for he supposes the empire of Asia to have been acquired in B. C. 2047, which, according to the chronology he followed, was fifty years before the birth of Abraham. " But, we know," continues he, " that no Assyrian empire governed at the time of the war described in Genesis xiv. : and those events occurred not long before the birth of Ishmael, about the eighty-fifth year of Abraham's life, which, according to Prideaux, was in B. C. 1912 ; a hundred and thirty-five years after the Assyrians are supposed to have governed Asia."*

It was not, he thinks, till the year B. C. 711 that the revolt of the Medes took place ; and this insurrection did not immediately result in the formation of an independent sovereignty. Herodotus, on the contrary, after mentioning that the Assyrians had been in possession of Upper Asia five hundred and twenty years, and that the Medes were the first who threw off their authority, adds that some time elapsed before the latter people chose a supreme ruler. Licentiousness followed their victory over their former masters ; depravity and weakness distinguished the measures of the popular government ; and at length the sufferings they endured and the greater evils they apprehended induced them to elect a king, the celebrated Dejoces. The Assyrian empire, therefore, was not dismembered at the period this civil war gave freedom to the followers of Arbaces ; and to obtain proofs of its vast power at a much later epoch it is only necessary to consult the pages of the Sacred Volume.

Jackson, whose attention was necessarily drawn to this subject in his "*Chronological Antiquities of the Hebrews*," remarks that Scaliger, Petavius, and other modern writers have been led by Ctesias into a confused notion of the Assyrians having been really subjected to the Medes, and

* • Fasti Hellenici, vol. i. p. 281.

afterwards recovering their independence, and establishing a new empire at Nineveh. Those who hold this opinion are no doubt puzzled by the facts recorded in the Bible, that Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, removed the Ten Tribes from Samaria into the mountains of Media, and that Sennacherib sent into Judea a colony of Assyrians. Syncellus endeavours to explain this inconsistency by supposing that the Assyrian empire was really subdued by the Medes, but that the name was still retained on account of its ancient grandeur, and that those who after the time of Arbaces are called kings of Assyria were only deputies appointed by the conquerors.

The same author, alluding to the opinions of Prideaux, who identifies Arbaces with Tiglath-pileser, and Belesis with Nabonassar, pronounces them to be “mere invention, and not founded in any chronology.” But being sensible, says he, that Media was subject to the king of Assyria (and that there was no king in Media distinct from the king of Assyria to the end of the reign of Sennacherib), he supposes a second defection of the Medes from the Assyrians, and that they revolted from Sennacherib after the loss of his army in Judea. This, he remarks, which Dr Prideaux calls the second defection, was in truth the first which happened upon the death of Sennacherib; and neither Ctesias nor any other ancient historian ever mentioned a second revolt of the Medes.*

The confusion of names and dates in the works of different chronographers renders it impossible to establish more than the accession of those monarchs on the Assyrian throne who, by waging war in Palestine, connected their history

* Chronological Antiquities; or the Antiquities and Chronology of the most Ancient Kingdoms, from the Creation of the World for the Space of Five Thousand Years, &c. By John Jackson, Rector of Rossington, &c. Vol. i. p. 302—305.

with that of the Hebrews. But even in this case, the most favourable which can present itself to a modern reader, there is only an approximation to certainty ; for nothing is more common than to see the same epithets and titles applied to different princes, whereby, unless their actions were remarkable, the periods of their respective reigns are covered with obscurity. Mr Clinton gives the following table of the kings of Assyria and Babylon from the year B. C. 769 to 606 ; that is, from the government of Pul, the first Assyrian monarch noticed in Scripture, to the destruction of Nineveh under Saracus or Ninus the Second.

| ASSYRIA. | | | BABYLON. | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|--------|-------|
| | YEARS. | B. C. | | YEARS. | B. C. |
| 21. Pul | before | 769 | | | |
| 22. Tiglath-pileser | before | 738 | Nabonassar | 14 | 747 |
| | | | Nadius | 2 | 733 |
| 23. Shalmaneser | | 729 | Chenzirus et Porus | 5 | 731 |
| 24. Sennacherib | before | 713 | Jugaeus | 5 | 726 |
| 25. Esarhaddon or Sardana- palus | 18 | 711 | Mardocempadus | 12 | 721 |
| | | | Archianus | 5 | 709 |
| 26. Asordanes or Nergelus | | | | | |
| at Babylon | 6 | 699 | Interregnum | 2 | |
| in Assyria | 2 | 693 | Hagisa 30 days | | |
| | | | Marudach Baldanes 6 ms. | | |
| | | | Belbus | 3 | 702 |
| | | | Apronadius Aserdanes | 6 | 699 |
| | | | Regibalus | 1 | 693 |
| Adrameles or Sammu- ghes | 21 | 691 | Mesessimordachus | 4 | 692 |
| | | | Interregnum | 8 | 688 |
| Axerdis frater Sam- mughis | 20 | 670 | Asaridinus | 13 | 680 |
| Nebuchodonosor or Sardanapalus | 20 | 650 | Saosduchinus | 20 | 667 |
| Saracus or Ninus II. | 24 | 630 | Chinaladanus | 22 | 647 |
| Nineveh destroyed | | 606 | Nabopolassar | 21 | 625 |
| | | | Nebuchadnezzar | 43 | 604 |

That Esarhaddon was the 25th king is known from Abydenus ; and hence the other reigns are determined. If Esarhaddon was the 25th, Pul must have been the 21st, and Sarac the 30th. The first five of these kings and their times down to the accession of the 25th in the beginning of the year B. C. 711, are fixed upon undoubted authority ; whilst the reigns of the 27th, 28th, and 29th, are given from Berosus by Polyhistor. The period of the two last reigns is, we are assured, limited to 44 years on sufficient evidence ; but if the first of these had 21 or 20 years (which is ascertained from Polyhistor), there remain 23 or 24 for the last king Saracus. It likewise appears from the same author, as well as from the Astronomical Canon, that Babylon had always kings of her own from the earliest times ; some of whom were subject to the Assyrians and others independent, but they never acquired extensive dominion till the days of Nebuchadnezzar.*

Again, Polyhistor, following Berosus, describes a term of 526 years which ended at the accession of Pul. But it is extremely uncertain what king is meant by these authors under this name. It appears, however, that according to the former he was succeeded on the throne by Sennacherib, who is placed by the same chronologer in B. C. 692. No years are assigned to the reign of Pul ; but if we assume 19 or 20, we shall have B. C. 712 or 711, for the termination of the 526 years which constitute the period mentioned above. The coincidence of this result, both in the number and date, with the statement of Herodotus, leaves little doubt that in this term of 526 years, ending about B. C. 711, was indicated by Berosus the same period of the Assyrian empire which in the work of the father of history is expressed by 520 ; the one giving the term exactly, while the other used round

* Fasti Hellenici, vol. i. p. 278.

numbers. The precise date of its termination, B. C. 711, is ascertained by Scripture, with which Herodotus agrees ; and we accordingly obtain $711 + 526 = \text{B. C. } 1237$ for its commencement.

From all these particulars compared with each other we may collect that the Assyrian empire, commencing B. C. 1237, subsisted 526 years under a dynasty of twenty-four kings ; that under Esarhaddon the 25th the empire was lost, but that the Assyrian monarchy continued under six kings a farther period of 105 years ; and, finally, that it terminated with the 30th king in B. C. 606. It is remarked by Mr Clinton, that Ctesias in his term of 1306 years confounded the Assyrian *empire* with the Assyrian *monarchy*, and assigned to the latter a date considerably too high. But as the monarchy ended in B. C. 606, and the empire in B. C. 711, we have B. C. 1912 for the beginning of his period of 1306 years ; and this period B. C. 1912 — 606 includes the 526 years of the empire.

Much light is unquestionably thrown on this intricate subject by the distinction between the simple monarchy and the imperial condition of the Assyrian government ; for while the one may be carried back to a very remote age, the other, it is obvious, did not begin till five centuries prior to the reign of Esarhaddon. Polyhistor in one place gives 975 years as the interval between the conquest of Babylon by the Medes and the commencement of the Assyrian empire of 526 years ; carrying back the former event ($1237 + 975$) to B. C. 2212. Niebuhr, remarking that the observations sent from Babylon by Callisthenes to Aristotle went back 1903 years before the time of Alexander the Great ; that the beginning of this period nearly coincides with the date assigned by Berosus to the taking of Babylon by the Medes ; and that this series of observations probably went back to some great political epoch ; concludes with

great probability that the capture of Babylon by the Medes is to be placed 1903 years before the time of Alexander. This inference will fix that epoch at B. C. 2233, only 21 years higher than the date obtained from Polyhistor, whose period for the times preceding the Assyrian empire will be extended by this addition from 975 to 996 years ; an alteration which will appear the more reasonable when it is considered that in the 48 years ascribed to the eleven reigns the numbers are doubtful. “ In that passage, then,” says Mr Clinton, “ we may substitute some other number, perhaps 69 for 48 ; which will raise the preceding period of 2212 to B. C. 2233. With only this alteration in the numbers, founded on the observation of Niebuhr, the following table will exhibit the leading epochs, according to the positions which have been established in the preceding inquiry.

| YEARS. B. C. | | | YEARS. B. C. | |
|---------------------------|------|------|------------------------|----------|
| (Ninus B. C. 2182.) | | | | |
| Assyrian Monarchy | 1306 | | Conquest of Babylon by | |
| years before the em- | | | the Medes: 8 Me- | |
| pire | 675 | 1912 | dian kings | 224 2233 |
| During the empire, 24 | | | | |
| kings | 526 | 1237 | Eleven kings (48) | 69 2009 |
| (Sardanapalus B. C. 876.) | | | | |
| After the empire, 6 | | | 49 Chaldeans | 458 1960 |
| kings | 105 | 711 | 9 Arabians | 245 1482 |
| | 1306 | | Ended | — 1237 |
| Capture of Nineveh | | 606 | | 996 |

The Assyrian empire had certainly not extended over Asia at the time of the Hebrew exode, when many independent kings are mentioned in the Scriptures ; nor even at the time of the first servitude, when a sovereign prince reigned in Mesopotamia. Down, therefore, to B. C. 1550 the country between the Euphrates and Tigris was not subject to the Assyrians. These facts confirm the narrative of Herodotus and the calculations of Polyhistor, and refute the opinions of those who

on the faith of Ctesias have been led to the supposition that the empire of Asia was acquired by the Assyrians 1306 years before the end of their monarchy. It is true that Plato considered the kingdom of Priam to be under the dominion of the Assyrians; but notwithstanding so high an authority, it is probable that during the whole period of 526 years their empire was principally confined to the upper Asia, and extended not far to the westward. We know that from the time of Ahab to the reign of Joash, a period of seventy years, Syria was at once powerful and independent, and that the Assyrians did not obtain dominion over it till after the year B. C. 769, being less than sixty years before the revolt of the Medes. The western and southern countries of Asia Minor were probably never invaded by the monarchs of Nineveh till the days of Esarhaddon and his successors, who pushed their conquests in that direction when they were excluded from the higher provinces by the several nations who had thrown off the Assyrian yoke and asserted their independence.*

But whatever doubts may hang over the history of the Assyrians as connected with the enterprise of the Medes, it is too clear to admit of any controversy that the government

* *Fasti Hellenici*, vol. i. p. 280—283. I have given above an abstract of the arguments used by Mr Clinton in support of his views on the origin of the Assyrian *monarchy*, the fall of the *empire*, and the destruction of Nineveh. That the Assyrian monarchy was not dissolved at the revolt of the Medes is manifest, as well from sacred as profane history; and that Media did not become a separate kingdom at the period when it shook off the supremacy of the Assyrians is equally capable of being satisfactorily proved. But subsequent reflection has not weakened the opinion stated in the second volume of this work, that the kings who ruled at Nineveh after the insurrection under Arbaces were Medes by extraction and not natives of Assyria.

With regard to the origin of the Assyrian power, authorities are so little agreed that it matters not greatly whether we place the reign of Nimus in B. C. 2183, or 2126. There is the same room for doubt as to the period at which the Assyrian power was disturbed and the succession of kings interrupted by the disaffection of the tributary states—whether it was in B. C. 821, 747, or 711. The reader will compare the authorities and satisfy himself.

of Nineveh was increasing in strength at the period when the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were hastening to their fall. The power of Egypt, too, was already verging to decline; or at least, if compared to the warlike resources commanded by Pul and his successors, it was obviously no longer able to check the tide of conquest which threatened to overflow the western parts of Asia. The fate of the Hebrews, however, was not altogether suspended on the fortunes either of their enemies or their allies. It was to themselves that they owed their numerous disasters and final captivity; for had they continued true to one another and to the faith which they received from their ancestors, they might have defied the ambition of Assyria, and the insidious policy of the Pharaohs.

The schism of Jeroboam sowed the seeds of those events which sprang up in the reigns of Hoshea and Zedekiah. It was the policy of this usurper to raise a wall of separation between the people of Judah and the Ten Tribes, being apprehensive that no other means could prevent the return of the latter to their wonted allegiance under the house of David. But in effecting this object, he rooted out the principles of that salutary patriotism which alone could have secured the independence of both nations, encompassed as they now were with restless neighbours who grudged their conquests or coveted their territory. The jealousy which rankled in the two governments of Jerusalem and Samaria drove each of them in their turn to seek aid from the idolaters who dwelt on their eastern borders, and even to form with them matrimonial alliances. Hence arose the prevailing disaffection from the Mosaical institutions and the subsequent corruption of morals which prepared both the Israelites and the Jews for the hand of the invader, and finally erased their names from the list of sovereign states.*

* It is mentioned above that Tiglath-pileser sent his captives to the

At this epoch Egypt, which had repeatedly turned a longing eye to the rich plain watered by the Jordan, was without doubt under some anxiety respecting the designs of Assyria, and therefore lent a ready ear to the king of Israel when he solicited military assistance. The ally of Hoshea, who encouraged him to defy the resentment of Shalmaneser, was Sabacon or So, the first of the Ethiopian dynasty. During the reign of Anysis, this prince, descending from the regions of the Upper Nile, attacked the Egyptians, and drove their sovereign from the throne, who is said to have fled into the fens or the less accessible districts of the maritime provinces. The conqueror ruled fifty years, at the end of which period, in obedience to an oracle, he resigned the sceptre and returned to Abyssinia. This triumph on the part of Sabaco is placed by Africanus in the twenty-second year before the era of Nabonassar, that is, B. C. 769. In this conclusion the Scriptural narrative and the calculation of Africanus coincide with the statement of Herodotus; whence is supplied a good ground at once for the accuracy of the date and for the veracity of the Grecian historian.

No policy, perhaps, however wise, could have saved the kingdom of Judah from falling under the yoke either of Egypt or Assyria, after the subjugation and captivity of the Israelites. The possession of Damascus and the conquest of Samaria rendered the sovereigns of Nineveh more powerful than ever in those countries, and encouraged them to disclose their ambitious design of extending their dominion to the shores of the Mediterranean. Phenicia consented to receive the law from them, and even to contribute a naval armament to assist in subduing their neighbours, the citi-

river Kir, which at the present day is called Kur by the Russians, and Kier by the Persians. It unites its waters to the Aras or Araxes, and empties itself into the Caspian sea under the 39th degree of north latitude. A people of a foreign aspect, called Usbecks, dwell there at this time, who may be the descendants of those captives.—*Jahn's Hebrew Commonwealth*, vol. i. p. 110

zens of Tyre. But this brave people, who afterwards defied the power of Alexander, encountered the Assyrian fleet and defeated it with great loss; a victory which, whilst it procured them high renown, excited in a great degree the resentment of Shalmaneser.*

Hezekiah, who saw clearly the danger with which he was surrounded, adopted like Hoshea the questionable expedient of having recourse to an Egyptian alliance, and of refusing the wonted tribute to his master at Nineveh. Sennacherib, who was now on the throne, resolved to punish his disaffection, and with this view made preparations for attacking him in his capital. But meanwhile, Tirhakah, a prince of an Ethiopian or Arabian dynasty, put himself in motion at the head of a numerous army, to create a diversion in favour of his ally, as well as to raise the siege of Libnah, now invested by his powerful enemy. The Assyrian lost no time in meeting the ruler of Egypt, whose interposition had so far disconcerted his plans. A battle ensued, which terminated to the advantage of the northern monarch, who, pursuing his success to the very banks of the Nile, inflicted a severe loss upon the vanquished.†

It was upon his return to Jerusalem that the boastful invader sustained the memorable calamity recorded in Scripture, where it is stated that 185,000 of his men perished in one night. The ablest divines seem now to agree in the conclusion that the weapon employed by the angel of death was the scorching wind of the desert, which still continues to prove fatal to such as are surprised by its attack amidst the sands of Arabia and Egypt.‡

* Joseph. lib. xix. c. 14, where he cites the Tyrian History of Menander.

† Herodot. Enterpe, c. 141.

‡ The account of this event given by Herodotus is well known. "On their arrival at Pelusium, so immense a number of mice infested by night the enemy's camp, that their quivers and bows were gnawed in pieces. In the

Esarhaddon, after participating in the guilt of his father's murder at Nineveh, resolved to avenge the disgrace which had stained his country's arms under the walls of Jerusalem. Entering Judea with a great force he defeated Manasseh and carried him prisoner to Babylon; but yielding soon afterwards to the suggestions of a more generous policy, he sent his captive home, devoted, it may be presumed, to the interests of Assyria, and completely weaned from the national bias in favour of an Egyptian coalition. This inference derives some countenance from the conduct of his grandson Josiah, who refused to Pharaoh-Necho a passage through his kingdom, when the latter was on his march to attack Carchemish, a city on the Euphrates, at that time belonging to the Assyrians. The Jewish sovereign risked an engagement in which he lost his life; and as the Egyptians were now triumphant in Syria, they deposed Shallum his son, and placed on the throne an older prince whose name was changed to Jehoiakim.

At this juncture Nabopolassar, who saw Palestine as well as the Syrian provinces wrested from him, sent his heir, the celebrated Nebuchadnezzar, with a formidable army, to recover the conquered districts. At first he succeeded in driving back the troops of Necho; then he besieged Jerusalem, which fell into his hands after a short resistance, plundered the temple, and carried the king in fetters to Babylon. The curtain was now about to drop on the regal state of Judah till the return of happier days; for though two princes followed Jehoiakim on the seat of David they exercised merely a deputed authority, and were removed at the caprice of the victor to his capital, where they soon afterwards fell into utter insignificance

morning the Arabians, finding themselves without arms, fled in confusion, and lost great numbers of their men." Euterpe, 141.

Josephus calls it a "judicial pestilence" sent against the Assyrians. Lib. x. c. 1.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE CONDITION OF THE WORLD AT THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY BEFORE THE ERA OF REDEMPTION ; THE RISE OF LEARNING IN ASIA AND EUROPE ; AND THE ORIGIN OF CIVILISATION AMONG THE GRECIAN AND ROMAN STATES.

THE Hebrew nations were not permitted to fall into the hands of their enemies until they had fulfilled the purpose for which their ancestors were called by Divine Providence from the midst of an idolatrous world. Tracing the progress of society from the day when Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan down to the epoch of the Assyrian conquest, we discover a great advance in civilisation, in the arts, and even in learning. The rude Canaanites appear to have been softened by intercourse with a people who brought among them the knowledge and handicrafts of Egypt ; and who could teach them not only to cultivate their land, but also to preserve records of past events, the rights of property, and the ramifications of family descent. It is true that as long as the Judges ruled, the ancient simplicity still remained among the vine-dressers and herdsmen of the tribes. Re-

finement was either unknown or despised ; and the manners of Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, prove that the pleasures arising from the exercise of intellect and the creations of fancy did not yet hold a high place among the enjoyments of social life.

But it is nevertheless unquestionable that the taste of the nation was gradually improving, though it did not manifest itself in any sudden or striking change till the accession of David to the throne of Judah. The palace of Saul no doubt displayed certain tokens of elegance ; we see there the forms and stateliness of a court, the recreation of music, the magnificence of royal feasts, and the usual crowd of retainers who surround the person of an eastern monarch. There was not, however, any trace of literature, without which wealth only supplies the means of coarse dissipation and unseemly riot ; the muses lent not their inspiration to the festivities of this rustic prince ; and the voice of moral wisdom was never heard lifting up her voice in his halls, to elevate the affections and enlighten the understanding.

The next age presents the most agreeable evidence of a forward movement in most of the pursuits which adorn the intercourse of mankind, and at the same time give permanence to their highest acquisitions. Between the administration of Othniel and the reign of the son of Jesse no contemporaneous record is preserved to embody the opinions or transmit the history of that long period. Even the Book of the Law seems not to have been perused nor to have had its sanctions enforced during the four or five centuries of the commonwealth. No reference is made by the rulers of Israel to the writings of the covenant, nor to any other authority superior to the usages of their fathers, which already wore the aspect of a tradition rather than of a code comprehending the national statutes. By one who should read the Book of Judges, without being previously acquainted with the Pentateuch, it

could scarcely be discovered that a system of moral precepts and religious ceremonies had been revealed to the Hebrews, resting on the authority of the Almighty, and received by them as the very basis of their government, civil and ecclesiastical.

Before Solomon ascended the throne, a great alteration had taken place in the sentiments of the people, and in their capacity of being taught. The splendid ritual observed in his temple would have had neither interest nor meaning to the multitude whom Ehud delivered from the hands of Eglon, or who followed Barak to Mount Tabor against Sisera the captain of Jabin's army. But even in the days of the wise king the demand for literary productions was so small that many works to which allusion is made in the canonical scriptures were allowed to perish. There are no remains of Nathan the prophet, no relics of the Book of Gad, and even of the memoirs of Solomon himself, with the prophecy of Abijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer, no fragments are known to have descended beyond the age in which they were composed. Every one must regret that the predictions, the exhortations, the reproofs of Elijah and of his inspired successor, were not written at length, and handed down for the learning of posterity. The sublime thoughts and pious lessons of the Tishbite might have warmed the hearts of his countrymen in the latter days, when tribulation fell upon them and the favour of Jehovah appeared to be withdrawn; and the labours, the sufferings, and constancy of Elisha, might have afforded an example to the children of Abraham down to the remotest of their generations. But it was not till a greater object was to be accomplished that a fulness of time arrived and a new order of men sprang up; destined by Providence to connect the ancient economy with a more perfect system of belief and of atonement, and by a series of prophetic inti-

mations to bind in one the two great dispensations of the divine mercy.

It was not, in short, till the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were falling into decay that men were raised up by the Divine Wisdom qualified to communicate the great secrets of the future, and to fix them, too, in an imperishable record. Before the candlestick was finally removed a light was placed in it fitted to irradiate the dark parts of the earth, and to guide the feet of the most distant nations into the way of peace. When the corruptions which marked the reigns of Uzziah and Ahaz attracted the eye of Heaven the voice of prophecy became louder and more distinct ; the veil that covered the perspective of remote events was partly drawn aside ; and the inspired teachers of the divine will were commanded to make known the great plan of restoration which had been hidden in the counsels of the Omnipotent since the creation of the world. It was then that the servants of God began to write, because there was no longer to be a succession of prophets, and more especially because the predictions uttered at that period had a reference to occurrences the importance of which did not cease with the generation to whom they were addressed.

It has been customary to divide those holy men into two classes, the greater and the less ; respect being had to the extent and purpose of their writings. In the former series are comprehended Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel ; the latter amount to twelve, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. Isaiah began to prophesy in the reign of Uzziah, and continued to the first year of Manasseh ; Jeremiah flourished immediately before the great captivity ; Ezekiel entered upon his office in the fifth year of King Jehoiakin's bondage ; and Daniel, who was only twelve

years old when he was carried to Babylon, did not receive the revelations of the Most High till he was called to expound the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar. Of the lesser prophets, again, Jonah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah preceded the destruction of the kingdom of Israel; Nahum and Joel appeared between that catastrophe and the captivity of Judah; Habakkuk, Obadiah, and Zephaniah exercised their office at the time when Jerusalem was besieged, and during the subsequent thralldom; Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the last of all, taught their people after the return from Assyria.*

Isaiah, in the sixth chapter of his sublime prophecies, relates that in the year king Uzziah died he saw Jehovah “sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.—Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.—Then said I, Lord, how long? and he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.”

The principal object of the prophecies of Isaiah is to set

forth the Babylonian captivity ; the return from the land of sorrow ; and, finally, the reign of the Messias as the minister of Jehovah and the Redeemer of his people. In the first six chapters, which constitute one discourse, he denounces in the strongest language the moral disorders that prevailed throughout the kingdom of Judah, and threatens a severe retribution. In the following six chapters he speaks of the siege of Jerusalem by the armies of Pekah, and Rezin the king of Damascus, and promises to Ahaz the birth of the Deliverer, under the name of Immanuel. He pours out bitter invectives on the Assyrian monarch, whom he describes as a rod in the hand of the Almighty for chastising the wicked, especially the inhabitants of Syria and Israel, over whose heads many calamities were then suspended. In chapters eleventh and twelfth he concludes this section of his writings by promising to his countrymen a king at once just, wise, and valiant, who was destined to restore all things to security and peace. At the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah he pronounces some fearful judgments against Babylon, the Philistines, Moab, Damascus, Samaria, and Egypt ; and at a later period he lifted up his voice against Arabia, Jerusalem, Tyre, and all the regions of Judea.

The war of Sennacherib against Hezekiah gave occasion to several solemn predictions. He foretold the siege of Jerusalem ; he was a witness of its progress ; and he announced the miracles which were to distinguish its end ; threatening at the same moment the enemies of Judah with the vengeance of the Lord. He next promises to the pious sovereign and his people a happy reign, accompanied with the enjoyment of a perfect freedom ; and this felicitous era he describes in language so elevated and glowing that it has been very properly applied to the government of the Messias and the triumphs of his church.

The fortieth chapter and the five which succeed it con-

tain an instructive dissertation on the existence of God, the truth of the Hebrew religion, and the vanity of heathen idols. In this part of his book the loftiness of the prophet's ideas are almost equalled by the magnificence of his language ; proving that in his case the Spirit of God employed the faculties of a man endowed with the gifts of a rare genius and a refined taste. He next cheers the disconsolate people of the holy city by fixing their hopes on Cyrus the Persian prince, and by assuring them of redemption from captivity under his mild government, after humbling the power of Babylon and crushing her images in the dust. From the forty-ninth chapter to the end of the sixty-fifth he represents in vivid colours the office of the Messias, his labours, the persecutions he endures, the death he undergoes, and the blessings which he procures for the whole race of mankind. He beholds, too, afar off, the calling of the Gentiles, the rejection of the Jews, and the full establishment of the church in which the Redeemer sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied, receives a portion with the great, and divides the spoil with the strong.*

It is not surprising that Isaiah should have been always esteemed the most eloquent of the prophets. St Jerome says that his writings are an abridgment of the Holy Scripture ; a collection of the most valuable principles and doctrines that were ever addressed to the human mind ; and that a careful reader may find in them a system of natural philosophy, of ethics, and of theology. Grotius compares Isaiah to Demosthenes ; for while there is found in the prophet all the purity of the Hebrew language, there may be discovered in the orator all the delicacy of Attic taste. Both are great and magnificent in their style, abounding in beautiful figures, ardent in their feelings, and extremely vehe-

* Calmet's Commentary, and Dictionnaire, sous le mot Isaïe.

ment in their diction when they had to reprimand vice or condemn mean and dishonest conduct.*

But it is not my object to describe the qualities of this sublime author viewed as the minister of the Eternal; it is rather to set him forth as a type of that class of writers who, at the period in question, began to cultivate literature in connection with the most sacred purposes of religion. Isaiah marks the commencement of a new era in letters as well as in the prophetical functions. Prior to his age the duty of the inspired teacher was confined to temporary events, the admonition of a wicked king, or the punishment of a rebellious people. The seers, for example, who flourished under David and his immediate descendants did not extend their cares beyond the generation to whom they were sent, and seemed not to feel an interest in any occurrence but such as respected the temple of Jerusalem and the royal house on mount Zion, where the God of Israel and his earthly representatives had fixed their abode. Even Elijah and his zealous successor were, comparatively speaking, only the prophets of their own days; and as their predictions, their warnings, and expostulations were meant for passing concerns, they were not written as a system for the learning of posterity.

In the two centuries which elapsed between Solomon and Ahaz, the studies which refined and graced the court of the former prince appear to have fallen into neglect. The corruption of manners which followed the schism in the Jewish church, when the calves were set up at Bethel and Dan, must have occasioned in both kingdoms an utter disregard

* Quid loquar de Physica, Ethica, Philosophia? Quidquid potest humana lingua proferre et mortalium sensus accipere, isto volumine continentur. Hieron. Prefat. in Isai. — *Calmat's Commentary*. Grotius, on 2 Kings xix. 2, uses these words: "Huic ego Græcorum Demosthenem comparo: puritas Hebræismi in Esaia, Attacismi in Demosthene: magnificus utrique dicendi character," &c.

of literary pursuits, inasmuch as we find not in that long interval any composition, sacred, historical, or philosophical, which was thought worthy of being preserved. When Hezekiah reformed in his capital the worship of God, he deemed it expedient to have recourse to the psalms and hymns used in the time of David; the piety of subsequent ages having produced nothing which could be added to those sacred lyrics. The spirit of divine poetry which loves a pure and generous heart, had chosen none after the demise of the son of Jesse into which it might breathe the same lofty sentiments of devotion, the same deep feeling of the magnificence of nature, and a similar veneration for the great attributes of the Eternal.*

Nay, there is reason to apprehend that the book of the Law itself, the authentic record of the covenant between Jehovah and his people, had fallen into entire oblivion. There is no mention made of it in the reign of Hezekiah; nor, as I have already noticed, was it till long afterwards that the sacred manuscript was discovered, as if by accident, in the house of the Lord. When employed in some researches connected with the repair of the temple, "Hilkiah the priest found a book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses. And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the Law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.—Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he rent his clothes."†

* 2 Chronicles xxix. 26, 30. "And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.—Moreover, Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer."

† 2 Chronicles xxxiv. 14—19.

From the statement now quoted, it is manifest that neither the king nor the priests were aware of the valuable deposit concealed in the holy place. In such circumstances the solemn service of the temple must have been regulated entirely by tradition; and the statutes of the God of Israel could not be otherwise regarded than as customs transmitted from distant times, concerning which no knowledge was any longer retained or desired. It is unnecessary to remark, that during an age so careless and corrupt no commentary on the writings of Moses could be composed, no transcripts could be taken, and no enforcement of them could be pressed upon the minds of the people. In short, it would not be too bold to infer, that for nearly two hundred years the Hebrews had ceased to read and to write; and that, until their doom was pronounced and their extermination decreed, no prophet arose to connect the past with the future, to perpetuate their history with a new order of things, and to associate by an everlasting bond their ceremonial institutions with the reasonable service and the exalted hopes of a better faith.

It is nevertheless obvious that the writings of the prophets do not present any tokens of a first attempt in composition. There is not, for example, in the Book of Isaiah any trace of that artificial style which, for the purpose of aiding the memory, was used in some of the psalms and of those other poems which have been described as acrostic or alphabetical. The same parallelism no doubt prevails even in the most finished pieces of the ancient Hebrews; a resource on the part of an author for impressing his sentiments more deeply on the mind, either by repeating his thoughts in a similar form or by exhibiting them in the light of contrast.

That the use of the pen had become more common after the days of Uzziah than during the generations which preceded him, may be inferred from the works of the minor

prophets, some of which have an import almost exclusively local, while others were produced by men whose habits did not associate them with the literary orders. Amos, for instance, had his place among the herdsmen of Tekoa; and it will be observed accordingly that his figures are chiefly drawn from pastoral life, and his illustrations carry a direct reference to the practical duties of his calling. The history of Jonah, again, has much the aspect of a fragment, a portion of a more extensive narrative, relating perhaps to that eventful intercourse which then commenced between Assyria and the sovereigns of Samaria and Jerusalem. The abruptness of the manner in which the adventures of the prophet are introduced gives countenance to the opinion, not here stated for the first time, that they were originally extracted from a longer composition: "Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it." The end, too, has so little the appearance of a conclusion, that it is natural to suppose something more must have followed.

The literary age had already dawned upon Greece and some other of the nations contiguous to Palestine. About eight hundred years before the reign of Augustus Cæsar at Rome, mankind on the borders of Asia and Europe were seen emerging from the cloud of antiquity, and taking to themselves a name as poets, historians, and chronologers. It is not denied that writers are named, as belonging to a still earlier age, whose fame was afterwards cherished by their countrymen with a degree of ardour proportioned to their ignorance of the period wherein they flourished, and of the works they were imagined to have produced. Linus, Orpheus, and Musæus stand at the head of those mysterious bards who at once taught the will of the gods, explained the secrets of nature, and softened the barbarous tribes whom they attracted by their sweet sounds. The poems of Homer are

indeed the most ancient of all the undisputed productions that time has spared ; but it must not be doubted that verse existed in Greece long before the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were chanted to those admiring crowds who first heard their inspiring strains.

It has been supposed that the earliest attempts of the Hellenic muses have not reached us, on account of the great commotions which took place soon after the Trojan war. In less than a century posterior to that event, while Tesamenus the son of Orestes reigned in Mycenæ, the Dorians, an uncultivated race, invaded the Peloponnesus ; destroying the civilisation which was just beginning to extend its benefits, driving many of the inhabitants into exile, and reducing those who remained under their dominion to the barbarous state whence they were slowly emerging. Of the manner in which this important revolution was effected we know little, though there is no doubt that it took place some time between the destruction of Troy and the period when the Median empire was established in Asia. The natives who were expelled passed over the Egean sea, and occupied considerable regions along the opposite shores ; carrying with them, it may be supposed, not a few of the literary productions they had been accustomed to admire, and most of the traditions on which the fabulous history of their tribes was founded. But notwithstanding these precautions, the barbarism from which they fled proved fatal to the works of their oldest authors ; nor was it until after the lapse of a long interval that the Peloponnesus began to recover from the effects of the Dorian invasion, and to present an asylum to her own people, now threatened by the arms of Persia.

When civilisation was again partially restored, curiosity was naturally excited respecting the poets who had flourished in former times, or with regard to those who had thrown a brilliant light on the gloom of exile by verses of a still higher

order than their primitive bards could produce. To supply, in this case, the want of authentic records by ingenious fiction, was perfectly accordant with the character of the Greeks, who never found it an ungrateful task so to model the obscure traditions of their philosophers and rhapsodists as to gratify national pride and advance the popular religion. It is accordingly admitted that very little credit is due to the details of their literary history prior to the date of the Olympiads; and if the fortunes of Homer, who lived at a comparatively recent epoch, were not distinctly known, what belief can be given to tales relative to Linus and Eumolpus, who are said to have adorned ages much more remote!

The heroic times were past before the poets who celebrated them arose; or if there were some contemporary authors, their fame was utterly eclipsed by their successors at a later period; and hence the remark, that were it not for Homer the names of Demodocus and Phemius would never have become immortal. With the Greeks epic poetry had an importance which it possessed among no other people, for it was the source of their national education in literature and the arts. The bards formed a separate class in society; they stood on an equal footing with the heroes whose praises they sang; and they were reckoned among the favourites of the gods, because the gift of genius by which they were distinguished was supposed to descend from heaven, or rather to be produced by the spirit of the divinity acting upon the human faculties.

This historic poetry, the foundation of the epic, was so closely associated with the festal enjoyments of all ancient people, that without it no banquet was held complete. Its strains were heard in the island of the Phæacians, no less than in the dwellings of Ulysses and Menelaus. It migrated, as we have already seen, with the colonies to the shores of *côla*; a fact which will not be doubted when the reader calls to

mind that these settlements were made during the heroic age, and that the descendants of those princes, in whose palaces at Argos and Mycenæ its echoes had formerly been heard, were frequently the leaders of the most celebrated expeditions.

Herodotus tells us that Homer lived about four hundred years before his own time; and it is very probable that in the days of the poet the Ionian colonies flourished in all the vigour of youth; an inference which is confirmed by their subsequent condition, though history has not supplied us with details. The author of the *Iliad* therefore appeared at an epoch most favourable to his great undertaking. The glimmerings of tradition respecting the siege of Troy were not yet extinct; and the efforts of the earlier versifiers had rather contributed so to mature those legends that they offered the noblest subjects for national poems. Before that time the warriors of the several tribes were not of importance to any except their own followers; but such as had distinguished themselves in the common undertaking against Troy immediately became heroes in the eyes of all Greece. Their actions and their sufferings now awakened a general interest; and their adventures were already celebrated by so many of the early rhymers that their characters were viewed through a poetical medium.

When Homer appeared the language of his country was improved, not less than the subject on which he was destined to write; and although its phrases were not limited in their use by strict grammatical rules, it was no longer anomalous nor destitute of melody. It had besides the rare property that it seemed to have a greater fitness for verse than for prose, and to fall into measure as it were by a voluntary movement. Never was there a tongue, says one of its historians, in which inspiration could pour itself forth with more readiness and ease.*

* Heeren's *Political History of Ancient Greece*, p. 98.

But admitting that the circumstances and spirit of his age were favourable to him—that time had now matured tradition into a poetical form, and that his countrymen were enthusiastic in their love of song—the lofty creations of his mind cannot be regarded otherwise than extremely wonderful. It must ever appear remarkable how he could have conceived the idea of a work so extensive as the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*; and how poems of such length could have been either composed or preserved without the aid of writing. With regard to the first point, scholars are now agreed in the opinion that the productions of the great bard, especially the *Iliad*, do not embrace in their plan such a complete unity as altogether to exclude the idea of different parts being composed and added at successive periods. But notwithstanding these supposed interpolations, it is manifest that each has one primary action; which, although it may be interrupted by frequent episodes, could hardly have been conceived or executed by more than a single author. At all events, it is impossible for us to consider either of those magnificent compositions as a mere collection of scattered rhapsodies. It will for ever be accounted a most gigantic step which could conduct the epic at once from the elements of versification to the highest state of accomplishment as a distinct species of poetry. But it ought not to be forgotten that the essential quality, the unity of the chief action, is suggested by the very nature of a romantic tale, which, though it indulges in digression, does not long neglect its hero, nor the main exploit connected with his valour, generosity, or physical strength.

It may be more difficult to comprehend how such poems could have been composed without the aid of an alphabet, and preserved perhaps for several generations, without having been committed to writing. To explain this mystery it has been usual to state that a class of singers, devoted conclusively to this pursuit, could easily retain in their me-

memory a more burdensome load ; that the poems were recited in parts, any one of which might be retained on the mind as a separate piece ; and that in a later age, when the Homeric poems had been actually intrusted to writing, the rhapsodists still knew them so perfectly that they could readily repeat any passage which might happen to be required.*

If Homer lived four hundred years before Herodotus, he was contemporary with Amaziah king of Judah, and with Joash the king of Israel ; or if we follow the authority of the Arundel marble, and place him at the beginning of the ninth century prior to our era, he must have occupied the same period with Ahaziah and Jehoram. Now, at that epoch it appears that writing was either unknown or had fallen into disuse among the Hebrews, some of the most distinguished of whose prophets have left no record of their labours and predictions. The duties with which they were charged could be sufficiently performed by oral teaching ; and as their admonitions had less relation to the distant future than to the exigencies of their own times, there was no necessity for preserving them in a permanent shape. Besides, at a

* This fact is stated by Plato in his *Ion* ; but we do not need to rely upon the testimony of that great philosopher for similar efforts of reminiscence. Passing over the disputed ground occupied by the admirers of Ossian,—large portions of whose poems had unquestionably reached the moderns through the medium of oral recitation,—we may refer to the *Dschigariade* of the Calmucks, a poem of greater extent than the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, and which yet has been perpetuated through the mouths of a nation. It is mentioned by Bergmann that this Calmuck Homer flourished in the last century. He is said to have made three hundred and sixty cantos ; though of the singers whose occupation it is to recite them, it is not easy to find one who knows more than twenty by heart. Bergmann has given a translation of one canto, which is about equal in length to a rhapsody of Homer. It thus appears to be no uncommon thing for the Calmuck singers to retain in memory a poem—or parts of a poem—as long as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.—*Bergmann's Nomadische Ströfungen unter den Kalmyken*. Vol. ii. p. 213, cited by Heeren, p. 100.

In connection with this subject, see an able article on “Homer and Hesiod” in the first volume of the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, p. 121—150.

period when few wrote hardly any could read, and hence all literary curiosity had died away. Even the sovereign, whose zeal for religion led him to expend large sums on the decorations of the temple, knew not, as I have repeatedly remarked, that there was within its shrine the holy writing of the ancient lawgiver of Israel; whilst the high-priest, whose office imposed upon him the obligation of expounding the decalogue to the people, seems not to have inquired whether the book wherein it was contained had perished or was still in his custody.

There is no certainty as to the time when writing was first introduced into Greece; and there is not even a tradition of any written or engraved copy of the works of Homer till the age of Pisistratus, or at least till that of Lysurgus. It has been observed that the date assigned to the introduction of alphabetical characters among the Greeks seems to defeat the intention of him who undertook to give the history of this event; for if a colony of Phenicians under Cadmus, long before the Trojan war, did really make known the use of letters, it might be expected that some inscription or other literary document would have remained, to connect the practice of writing with that remote era. It may seem equally strange, too, that if the art of writing was practised in the days of Homer, he should not once make any allusion to it. No reference is made in the *Odyssey* to epistolary correspondence, though many opportunities occur in which it could hardly fail to be mentioned, had such a mode of communication been common, or even occasionally used among the great, in those simple times. At first only eleven or at most sixteen letters were imported, even according to the testimony of those who ascribe this benefaction to the exertions of Cadmus, and the rest were added from time to time at a later period. But it was not till the ninety-fourth olympiad, or little more than 100 years before Christ, that

the Greek alphabet in the form it finally assumed was received at Athens.

Josephus, who was not without prejudice both as a Jew and as an author, was disposed to condemn the Greeks whenever they laid claim to antiquity, whether in political or philosophical concerns. With reference to the origin of their cities, the invention of arts, the institution of laws, and the writing of history, he maintains that they were but of yesterday. He gives them credit for their modesty in acknowledging that it was to the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, and the Phenicians, they owed their acquaintance with the oldest nations of the world; remarking, at the same time, that these distinguished classes of men derived their peculiar advantage, as chroniclers of the human race, from the circumstance of their inhabiting parts of the earth which were exempted from those periodical catastrophes which elsewhere destroyed all records of human improvement. But as for the country which the Greeks possess, says he, it has been overtaken by ten thousand forms of destruction, which in every instance have blotted out the memory of all former transactions; so that, being frequently compelled to renew their existence as a state, they considered every fresh beginning as the first origin of their several communities. It was also late, and with difficulty, that they came to know the letters they now use; for those who would carry back their knowledge of an alphabet to the highest antiquity, pretend that they learned it from Cadmus and the Phenicians, yet is nobody able to show that they have any writing preserved from that period, either in their temples, or in other public monuments. This scepticism as to their early literature, he adds, is confirmed by the fact, that it is extremely doubtful whether they knew letters at the time of the Trojan war, which, though it may be difficult to determine its precise date, certainly did not take place until many years after the

migration of Cadmus ; and the most prevailing opinion, and the one it may be presumed which is nearest the truth, is, that in those distant times they were unacquainted with the art of writing. At all events, there is not, he maintains, any composition in their hands, which the Greeks themselves account genuine, more ancient than Homer's poems, who without hesitation must be confessed to have lived subsequently to the expedition against Troy. Nay, it is reported that even he did not leave his works in writing, but that they were rescued from oblivion by wandering musicians, who chanted them in all parts of Greece, and that they were not collected into one until many years afterwards, which accounts for the numerous variations in the different cantos. Again, as to those who set about writing their history, such as Cadmus of Miletus, and Acusilaus of Argos, they lived but a little while before the Persian invasion. Finally, if we advert to the men who first introduced among them the principles of philosophy and the study of things celestial and divine, namely, Pherecydes the Syrian, Pythagoras, and Thales, it will be found that they unanimously declare they learned all they knew of such sublime mysteries from the Egyptians and Chaldeans, and that they themselves wrote but little. In literature and science, he concludes, the Greeks cannot boast of any thing older than the works now mentioned, and it is even very doubtful to what extent the most valuable of them can be pronounced authentic.*

The extract now made from the Jewish annalist conveys very distinctly his impression as to the recent origin of the Grecian communities, and the comparatively modern rise of their literature. In truth, the Athenians themselves did not conceal that the laws of Draco are the most ancient of their public writings ; and it is well known that he lived but

a short time before Pisistratus, or about six hundred and twenty years prior to the Christian epoch.

It is therefore probable that the use of alphabetical writing, as employed by authors in the structure of their works, did not become common till the period when verse gave way to prose ; because as long as the people at large were strangers to this wonderful art, it would be esteemed necessary by those who meant to address the public mind, to continue the wonted expedient of metre as the most powerful aid to the recollection. The laws of the early legislators and the prudential maxims of the wise were, as every one knows, embodied in verse ; a mode of composition which must have been recommended only by the assistance it afforded to reminiscence, in cases where the subject could so little require or admit the embellishments of song. Now, we have no record of any prose-writing until three centuries after the age usually ascribed to Homer. The materials of writing, too, must have been exceedingly scanty, and quite inadequate to the preservation of an extensive work. Stone, metals, and other heavy and durable bodies, were the only substances on which letters were engraved or impressed in those early times ; for it is admitted that the papyrus, or Egyptian reed, and the skins of animals, were not brought into common use till a period considerably later. •

Referring again to Homer, the contemporary of the kings who succeeded Solomon and Jeroboam, it is pronounced incredible, if the art of writing was common in his time, that in the course of so many thousand verses, relating to an immense variety of human affairs, there should be no notice whatever of books, of reading, or of letters ; that no treaty or league should be mentioned but such as were verbal, or as ratified by any other means than religious rites and superstitious observances ; that he should refer to no inscriptions on the tombs which he describes ; that he should not allude

to money stamped or engraven; and that, with all his desire to give an appearance of truth to his narratives, he should never refer to any old memorial or ancient record, but should always speak of events as handed down by the poets or gathered by tradition. Whatever difficulty, therefore, may appear in the hypothesis that the Iliad and Odyssey were not committed to writing by their immortal author, there cannot be less in the supposition that his countrymen, eight centuries and a half before the era of our faith, were familiar with the multiplied resources of an alphabetical notation.*

The Hebrews, it has been remarked, began about the middle of the eighth century before Christ to write more generally than at any former period; and as this date coincides with the time at which the Greeks acquired the use of letters, it might be concluded, had we no evidence to the contrary, that they also, till the reign of Uzziah, were strangers to the art of writing. But on the very surface of this inquiry, several facts present themselves which remove all doubt as to the prior attainments of the Israelites. Leaving out of view the books of Moses, which, however little read during the commonwealth, were unquestionably in the possession of the Levitical colleges, we obtain the still more satisfactory proof supplied by the Psalms of David,—compositions used in the daily service of the temple, and chanted with musical notes prepared by the master of the choir. Some of those pious hymns, provided for particular occasions, were sent to the chief musician to receive at his hand the suitable accompaniment; a process which seems necessarily to imply that they were *written* even agreeably to the modern acceptance of the term.

It is not unworthy of notice, as connected with this argu-

* Ency. Metro. as quoted above.

ment, that the Egyptians are supposed to have attained the use of phonetic characters about the time when David was on the throne of Judah, and that they owed this benefaction to the Edomites, the people among whom Moses dwelt after he left the court of Pharaoh. Sir Isaac Newton observes, that the descendants of Esau "carry to all places their arts and sciences, amongst which were their navigation, astronomy, and letters; for in Idumea they had constellations and letters before the days of Job who mentions them; and there Moses learned to write the Law in a book." He therefore considers it probable, that when the Edomites fled from David with their young king Hadad into Egypt, they carried thither also the use of letters; assuming as an indisputable fact that an alphabet was known to the particular branch of Abraham's progeny who dwelt in Arabia Petraea and on the borders of the Red sea. "There is no instance," he adds, "of letters for writing down sounds being in use before the days of David in any other nation besides the posterity of Abraham. The Egyptians ascribed this invention to Thoth, the secretary of Osiris; and therefore letters began to be in use in Egypt in the days of Thoth, that is, a little after the flight of the Edomites from David, or about the time that Cadmus brought them into Europe.*

By a different species of reasoning, an attempt has been made to prove that the Egyptians possessed not a phonetical alphabet till the reign of Psammetichus, or the seventh century before the christian era. The Jews, as well as other oriental nations, were accustomed at the earlier stages of their literature to use single characters, with the power of syllables. A European, or a modern Hebrew, takes for consonants the letters which are sometimes seen to compose whole words without one mark for a vocal sound, and sup-

* "The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended," p. 210. et

plies, as he goes along, the particular vowels which his knowledge of the language suggests as those required. The ancient Israelite, there is good reason to believe, looked upon those same letters as the representatives of entire syllables, though there are grounds not less satisfactory for concluding that he read in this manner during only a limited period. Long before the use of the masoretic points was adopted, he must have been aware of the defect of vowel-signs in certain syllables of the text, and thenceforward have begun to employ the letters of such syllables as consonants. Now, says Dr Wall, the Egyptian had much greater facilities for improvement with respect to vocalization, as he had no occasion to invent new vowel-letters, but only to make a freer use of those he already had. By calculating therefore the length of the interval during which the Jew used his letters, partly with syllabic and partly with consonantal powers, a very wide limit would be got for the duration of the phonetic system of the Egyptians; the commencement of which would thus be brought down to a date long posterior to the reign of Psammetichus, when their intercourse with the Greeks began.*

We are indeed informed by Herodotus, that before the accession of this prince all foreigners were excluded from Egypt; but that he, having gained the throne by the aid of certain Ionians and Carians, who happened to suffer shipwreck on the coast, gave them an asylum in his country, and encouraged the study of the Greek language. The lands conferred upon them, the historian subjoins, were called the Camp, and were situated on both sides of the Nile. He fulfilled all his other engagements with them, and intrusted to their care some Egyptian children to be instructed in the Greek tongue, from whom are descended those who still act

1. * Dr Wall's Inquiry into the Origin of Alphabetical Writing, p. 153.

as interpreters in that kingdom. Since the time of their first settlement in Egypt, they have, says he, preserved a constant communication with Greece, so that we have a perfect knowledge of Egyptian affairs from the reign of Psammetichus. They were the first foreigners whom the Egyptians received among them : “ Within my remembrance, the docks for their ships and vestiges of their buildings might be seen in the places they formerly occupied.”*

The reasoning may not be quite satisfactory which undertakes to determine the origin of phonetic characters among the Egyptians from the progress of an alphabetical arrangement in the Hebrew tongue ; and there may be intricacies in the path whereby an attempt is made to connect the introduction of letters at Memphis with the shipwreck of a few Grecian soldiers at the mouth of the Nile : still it is important to note the supposed coincidence with respect to time, which marks the commencement of writing as a popular art in the land of Judea, the dominions of Pharaoh, and in the Peloponnesus. The Jewish prophets, the Greek philosophers, and the Egyptian hierophants, appear to have acquired the use of letters for the ordinary purposes of life nearly at the same period. The historical era began in the same century throughout a great portion of the world ; a fact established by the institution of the Olympiads in Greece, the epoch of Nabonassar at Babylon, the foundation of Rome in the west, and the increased intercourse between Egypt and the northern shores of the Mediterranean. Herodotus, as we have already seen, after mentioning that the Carian and Ionian colonists near Bubastis preserved a constant communication with their countrymen in Europe, observes, that since the reign of Psammetichus “ we have a perfect knowledge of Egyptian affairs.”

In the history of the world there may have been a succession of days and nights, in which the beams of knowledge were repeatedly extinguished by clouds of intellectual darkness; and these alternations may have been occasioned by great political events, the rise and fall of vast monarchies in very ancient times, or by natural changes on the earth's surface,—those frightful catastrophes to which Josephus alludes as the cause why the Greeks had not at an earlier period risen to eminence in literature. Cicero, too, included among the impediments that had prevented the progress of the human race in science and civilisation the convulsions to which our globe is subject, and by the ravages of which the finest monuments of genius had been oftener than once overturned and consigned to oblivion. It is impossible, said the great orator, for mankind to attain a glory that is eternal, or even of very long duration, on account of those deluges and conflagrations of the earth which must necessarily happen at certain periods. The Jewish antiquary maintained that ten thousand destructions had successively swept the surface of the Grecian peninsula, removed all records of former times, and compelled the next generation of settlers to begin again the labours of improvement, to toil up the ascent the summit of which their predecessors had attained, and whence they in their turn were to be precipitated into the abyss of forgetfulness.

A similar impression may be traced among the opinions of the oldest sages of the East, of Pythagoras, and even of the Druids, the original priests and teachers of our own land. They believed that the universe was never to be entirely destroyed or annihilated, but was merely to undergo a succession of mighty changes, to be produced at one time by the ascendancy of water, and at another time by the agency of fire. This notion, entertained by philosophers in different regions, and at a great distance of time and place

from one another, was not, it is probable, the result of a minute examination of the outer coating of the earth, or a doctrine founded on a pure tradition transmitted from inquirers older than themselves; but was, it may be presumed, communicated through various corrupted channels from their common ancestors the family of Noah.

Nor is it unreasonable to conclude that the lands washed by the Egean sea were devastated by occasional floods as well as by the fury of volcanoes, of which last very distinct proofs may be observed at the present day. Some ages might elapse before the level was completely established between the Euxine and the Mediterranean, in the course of which many natural causes would occur to force the waters of the higher basin into the lower, and thereby to cover for a time the adjoining shores. Even the slightest of those concussions which result from the action of volcanic elements might widen the gates of the Propontis, and admit into the straits a greater mass of fluid than could be discharged without inundating the flat grounds on either side. An earthquake tearing the rocks asunder at the opening of the Bosphorus would infallibly produce one of those local deluges commemorated by the ancient philosophers and described by the poets, and thereby inflict upon Greece a calamity such as Josephus asserts to have frequently befallen that country, and which Cicero supposed must necessarily happen at certain periods. The experience of mankind elsewhere, though on a much smaller scale, bestows an air of probability on the conjectures now stated. Lakes which have slept for uncounted centuries in the bosom of the mountains are occasionally found, on the occurrence of some disturbing cause, leaving their beds in all the impetuosity of a torrent, and carrying desolation and death into the subjacent plains: and these are events which stamp themselves upon the memory of the survivors, and of their children's children.

through many generations; supplying a ground for the most solemn traditions, giving a subject to the poetical muse, and a basis for theoretical speculation to the philosophical historian.

Such revolutions in the physical world, as well as those which seem inseparable from the moral condition of society, may perhaps account for the postponement of literary excellence among the Greeks, the most ingenious people who have flourished since the dawn of that auspicious day which opened about eight hundred years before the reign of Augustus, and which, though often clouded in its course, has never again set in night. A reference to those catastrophes in connection with the annals of ancient literature might seem fanciful and altogether unworthy of a serious review, had not our attention been drawn to them by one of the oldest of uninspired authors, who fixes upon such incidents as the main cause of a remarkable fact, and which otherwise must have appeared quite inexplicable. The Egyptians and Chaldeans, it is maintained, could write, perform astronomical calculations, and record their discoveries for the learning of posterity, nineteen hundred years before the establishment of the Macedonian empire; whereas the descendants of Cecrops and Hellen remained ignorant of an alphabet till towards the decline of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

But though the age of letters and of history does not extend more than a hundred years beyond the period when Iysias was archon at Athens, it is not to be inferred that all narratives of an earlier date are undeserving of confidence. No scepticism has ever been so bold as to deny that Greece at a very remote era was occupied by the Pelasgi and Hellenes, whatever obscurity may attend their relationship to Inachus and Deucalion, the supposed ancestors of their tribes. From Dorus, Eolus, and Ion, the descendants of

Hellen, we may, relying on the faith of antiquity, derive the Dorians, Eolians, and Ionians, and also mark their progress as separate nations until they gradually coalesced under the dominant names of Lacedæmonians and Athenians.*

The situation of the Grecian peninsula almost necessarily connected its annals with those of the Asiatics and Egyptians, who, according to Josephus, enjoyed better means for securing the accuracy of their records. Placed at no great distance from the Syrian coast, and separated from the mouths of the Nile by a sea which less adventurous sailors than those of Tyre could easily cross, it could not long remain unknown to the restless spirit of commerce and of political ambition. Merchants, accordingly, visited its shores, and discontented emigrants sought a settlement in the interior; events which were attended with many signal benefits, long remembered by the gratitude of the natives, and perhaps exaggerated by their love of rhetorical declamation. Even those communities which justly claimed the honour of the most ancient establishment in the country, acknowledged themselves indebted to strangers for all the more important discoveries, not only in religion but in agriculture and the arts, and contented themselves with the glory of having diffused a borrowed light over the cloud of ignorance which had darkened their land.

It has been already mentioned that the principal colonies were planted in Greece by Cecrops, Danaus, Cadmus, and Pelops; the two former being esteemed Egyptians, the third a Phenician, and the last a Phrygian. The countries whence these adventurers proceeded had not yet, it is probable, made very high attainments in law and government, nor even in the mechanical pursuits which minister to the

* Thucyd. lib. i. c. 23. Strabo, lib. viii. Herodot. lib. i. c. 56.
Diodor. Sicul. lib. v. Dionys. Halicar. lib. i. Pausan. lib. viii.

wealth and comfort of society ; but it cannot be doubted that they were acquainted with many improvements altogether unknown to the simple Hellenes and the rude Pelasgi. We are told the Phenicians carried with them the knowledge of alphabetical signs ; a gift which seems not to have been fully appreciated, if a judgment may be formed from the limited use made of it by the indigenous inhabitants, and the late introduction of writing even for national purposes. It might be asserted, perhaps, that neither the wants nor the talents of the Hellenes were such as to lead them to the practice of this valuable art ; that they could not comprehend the utility of an invention so ingenious ; and that, though its importance might be perceived by a few individuals of more enlightened mind, the far greater part of the nation were contented with the ancient method of pictorial delineation, which was sufficient to express their simple ideas.

If any reliance may be placed on the common chronology, Cadmus arrived in Greece more than three centuries and a half before the birth of Homer ; and yet we have seen the great probability that the author of the *Iliad* did not write his poems, and in fact that the use of an alphabetical notation did not become common even among the most refined of his countrymen, till about six hundred years prior to the Christian times. Herodotus, who appears to have inquired into this subject with more than his usual diligence, informs his readers, that the Phenicians who came with Cadmus, of whom the Gephyrians were a part, introduced during their stay in Greece the knowledge of various sciences, and among other things “ letters,” with which, as he conceives, the natives were before unacquainted. These characters were at first such as the Phenicians themselves universally used ; but in process of time, he adds, they were changed both in sound and form. “ At that time the Greeks most contiguous to this people were the Ionians, who learned

these letters of them, and, with some trifling variations, received them into common use. As the Phenicians first made them known in Greece, they were called, as justice required, Phenician letters. By a very ancient custom, the Ionians denominate their books ‘diphteræ,’ or skins, because at a time when the plant of the biblos was scarce, they used instead of it the hides of goats and sheep. Many of the barbarians have employed these within my recollection. I myself have seen in the temple of the Ismenian Apollo, at Thebes of Bœotia, these Cadmean letters inscribed upon some tripods, and having a near resemblance to those used by the Ionians.”*

That these inscriptions existed in the temple of Apollo there is no reason to doubt, because Herodotus is justly regarded as a faithful witness of whatever things he asserts to have fallen under his own notice ; but that the tripods were as ancient as he imagined, is a conjecture which, without impugning his veracity, may be called in question. It is, at the same time, universally admitted that the Greeks must have derived their letters from the Syrian border, the resemblance between their characters in their original form

* Terpsichore, or lib. v. c. 58—61. Herodotus copies the inscriptions as follows. One of the tripods presents these words :

Ἀμφιτρων μ' ἀνέθηκεν ἰὼν ἀπὸ Τηλεβοῶων
Amphytrion's gift from Teleboan spoils.

This, says the historian, must have been about the age of Laius, son of Labdacus, whose father was Polydore the son of Cadmus. Upon the second tripod are these hexameter verses :

Σκαῖος πυγμαχίῳ με ἱκετοῖα Ἀπόλλωνι
Νικήσας ἀνέθηκεν τὴν περικαλλὲς ἀγάλμα.
Scaeus, victorious pugilist, bestowed
Me a fair offering on the Delphic god.

This Scaeus, says Herodotus, was the son of Hippocoon, if indeed it was he who dedicated the tripod, and not another person of the same name contemporary with Œdipus, the son of Laius. The third inscription is also in hexameters :

Λαοδάμης τριπόδ' αὐτὸν ἱσκούτη Ἀπόλλωνι
Μουναρχίῳ ἀνέθηκεν τὴν περικαλλὲς ἀγάλμα.
Royal Laodanus to Pho-bus' shrine
This tripod gave of workmanship divine.—BELOE.

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Royal Laodamus to Phoebus' shrine

This tripod gave of workmanship divine.—BELOE.

and those used by the nations of western Asia, being such that nothing short of an immediate intercourse can explain it. Besides, the voice of history on this point has at all times been distinct and unvarying. The Romans confessed that they received the elements of their literature from the Greeks ; whilst these last acknowledged that their acquaintance with alphabetical writing was communicated to them by the Phenicians.*

It is not a little remarkable that the Hellenes, though they received the letters and arts of the Egyptian, Phenician, and Phrygian colonists, did not in return surrender to them their native speech. From this fact, established by the most incontrovertible evidence, it is manifest that the number of strangers, who at successive periods migrated into Greece, bore but a small proportion to the original inhabitants ; otherwise the dialect of the barbarous progeny of Deucalion must have given place to the more refined language of the Cadmeans and their eastern allies. Much obscurity, it is true, hangs over the origin of the earliest Grecian states, and conceals the source whence flowed the principal stream of Hellenic vocables. That many words were borrowed from the Asiatic tongues, from Sanscrit, Hebrew, and Chaldaic, is as clear to the eye of competent scholars as any other portion of philological history. But it is equally true, though the proof may not be so strikingly obvious, that much was taken from an older language, of which the fragments are still to be found in various parts of Europe, as well as among the tribes who occupy the remoter shores of the Euxine sea.

* Herodotus observes that the Ionians call their book *diphteræ*. Major Rennell has added to this remark, that the Persians name a record or writing *duster* ; whence it has been considered not improbable that the Ionians borrowed the term from the Persians, together with the use of the skin itself, which was substituted for the biblos.

To establish an affinity between the languages of the East and of the West, and thereby to trace the filiation of the several races of mankind who inhabit the vast tract of country which extends from the Ganges to the Atlantic, is a task which has exercised the ingenuity of many learned men, and in some cases produced results worthy of their labour. It is remarked by an able author, that at the earliest dawning of history we find the different races of people in Europe nearly in the same relative situations which they now occupy, and that even in the oldest memorials we can scarcely discern a trace of those wandering tribes who may be supposed to have filled this portion of the world with inhabitants. Herodotus relates, that in a remote part of Europe, near the sources of the Danube, the Celtæ possessed extensive lands, and were, next to the Cynetæ, the most distant nation towards the setting sun; but it is unknown during how many ages they had dwelt there before the Grecian annalist obtained this scanty knowledge of them. There is no doubt, however, that the Teutonic families inhabited the northern countries of Europe at a period not long subsequent to the era at which he wrote. Pytheas, the navigator of Marseilles, who made a voyage of discovery in the North sea, mentions the Guttones, a people at the mouth of the Vistula, who carried on with their neighbours the Teutones a traffic in amber, one of the native productions of their territory. The Teutones are well known under that name; the Guttones are probably the Goths; and thus we already discover in the north of Europe two of the most celebrated branches belonging to the Germanic stem, in an age when even the name of Rome had scarcely been pronounced in the hearing of a Greek.*

* The Eastern Origin of the Celtic Nations, proved by a Comparison of their Dialects with the Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and Teutonic Languages. By James Cowles Prichard, M.D., F.R.S., &c. p. 11—24. This is a very ingenious and satisfactory work.

We learn from the same source that the Finns and the Slavonians are generally supposed to have been the latest among the great nations who formed the population of Europe. But Finningia and the Fenni are mentioned by Tacitus and Pliny, who place them beyond Germany and towards the Vistula. The Slavonians indeed are not early distinguished under that name, but rather by the appellation of Wends, given to them by the Germans, and which enables us to recognise their tribes in the geographical descriptions of the Roman authors, who place the Venedi near the Finns on the borders of Finningia. It is highly probable, too, that the Russians were known to Herodotus, and that they are even mentioned by him under a term varying but little from the one which is now applied to the same people by their Finnish neighbours ; for these last still distinguish the Muscovites by the name of Rosso-lainen or Russian people, and call themselves and nations of their own kindred Suomalainen. The word Rosso-lainen, heard and written by a Greek would be Rhoxolani ; and this epithet, I need not add, is used with reference to a nation, first described by Herodotus, and who, in the time of Strabo, were said to inhabit the plains near the springs of the Tanais and Borysthenes.*

The languages of these northern settlers, the Finns, the Laplanders, the Hungarians, the Ostiaks, and other Siberian Tschudes, have been carefully compared and analyzed by several German writers ; and the result seems to be a decided opinion on the part of the learned that those various tribes all sprang from one root. The primitive abode of this great race of men, or rather the earliest seat in which they have been discovered by historical inquiry, is the country which lies between the chain of Caucasus and the southern extremities of the Uralian mountains.

* Eastern Origin of Celtic Nations, p. 16.

But with reference to the southern nations of Europe, between whom and the Jews there was a more intimate connection, it is of still greater importance to be informed, that their dialects are so closely related to the ancient language of India as to prove that they too must have had a common origin. This valuable discovery was brought to light by a comparison of the Sanscrit with the Greek and Latin. It was found that a considerable number of words belong indiscriminately to all the three tongues, and also that a striking affinity subsists between their grammatical forms. Without deciding which of the two idioms, the Latin or the Greek, approaches most nearly to the Sanscrit, scholars now every where admit that they have all shot forth from one stem. Proceeding in the same path, modern philologists have farther proved that the Teutonic as well as the Sclavonic stand nearly in the same relation to the ancient language of India. Several intermediate tongues, moreover, such as the Zend and other Persian dialects, the Armenian and the Ossete, are supposed by etymologists who have examined their structure to belong to the same stock.

By these learned researches a connection is established between a considerable number of languages spoken by nations who are spread over a great part of Europe and Asia ; and the historical evidence hence deduced is, that the people in the former quarter of the globe who use dialects referable to the tongues of the latter must have originally migrated from Asia ; or, at all events, must have been of the same race with the Indians, whose vocabulary they share to so large an extent. The result of the inquiry, in short, has appeared in a firm conviction on the minds of those most competent to form a judgment, that the affinities known to exist between the Sanscrit, Greek, Latin, and German languages are perfectly irreconcilable with any other supposition than that of their having all been derived from a com-

mon source or primitive language spoken by a people of whom the Indians, Greeks, Latins, and Germans were equally the descendants.*

I have already remarked, that traces of a language apparently more ancient than either the Greek or Latin still linger among the fastnesses of Europe, especially in Wales, Ireland, the Scottish Highlands, and Armorican Gaul. The inquiry has frequently been made whether the Celtic dialects belong to the class of tongues now denominated Indo-European ; and the point at issue is an important one, because it has a particular bearing on the origin of the people who at present inhabit western Europe, including the several sections of our own country. In a word, we are hereby called to determine whether the same arguments which prove most of the other nations in this quarter of the world to have sprung from an eastern stem, may also be applied to that stock whose branches at the earliest period of history were spread over Gaul, Britain, and a part of Spain.

It is well known that writers on the history of languages and the antiquities of nations have been divided in their judgment with respect to this question. Adelung and Murray regarded the Celtic as a branch of the Indo-European, while Frederick Schlegel, Malte-Brun, Pinkerton, and Vans Kennedy, seem to have believed that it is of a distinct order, having no connection or affinity with the eastern tongues either in words or in grammatical construction. Dr Prichard has justly observed that a want of access to information respecting the Celtic dialects has prevented the learned from arriving at correct opinions on the relations of the several varieties of that speech to one another ; and hence has arisen the undeniable fact that this department in the history of languages still remains very imperfectly eluci-

* Edinburgh Review, No. 102, p. 562. Eastern Origin of Celtic Nations, p. 19.

dated. His own labours, however, coupled with those of Davis, Vallancey, Lloyd, Owen, and other modern writers, have thrown an advantageous light on this interesting portion of archæology. Assuming that there is an historical proof of the connection of the Slavonian, German, and Belgian races with the ancient Asiatic nations, he adds, "the languages of these races and the Celtic, although differing much from each other, and constituting the four principal departments of the dialects which prevail in Europe, are yet so far allied in their radical elements that we may with certainty pronounce them to be branches of the same original stock. The resemblance is remarkable in the general structure of speech, and in those parts of the vocabulary which must be supposed to be the most ancient, as in words descriptive of common objects and feelings, for which expressive terms existed in the primitive ages of society. We must therefore infer that the nations to whom these languages belonged emigrated from the same quarter."*

To those who study this subject with attention it will become more and more apparent that long prior to the migration of the colonies who spoke Sanscrit, or whatever was the tongue whence the Greek and Latin are derived, there was a current westward of more ancient tribes to whom Celtic was the native speech. These last, there is reason to believe, had held their course along the northern shores of

* Eastern Origin of the Celtic Nations, p. 22. "The main object," says Dr Prichard, "which I have had in view in the composition of this work, has been to institute such a comparison of the Celtic dialects with the languages which are allowed to belong to the Indo-European stock, as may tend to illustrate the relation of the Celtic people to the rest of mankind. In the course, however, of this inquiry I have incidentally discovered that the relation between the languages above mentioned and the Celtic is such as not merely to establish the affinity of the respective nations, but likewise to throw light upon the structure of the Indo-European languages in general, and particularly to illustrate some points of obscurity to which many writers on grammar and etymology have adverted without fully elucidating them."

the Black sea, and the left bank of the Danube, without mixing with the inhabitants of Thrace, Thessaly, and the Peloponnesus; carrying into Germany and the valleys of the Alps the primitive dialect to which they had been accustomed in Asia. From an analysis of this language, in the various forms which still survive, it appears not only that a great number of words are common to it with the Sanscrit, but also that its structure presents a very perceptible affinity to the principles on which the Semitic dialects are founded. There are likewise in Greek many roots and terms which are most naturally traced to a Celtic origin, though, for reasons about to be stated, the number of both is much greater in Latin.*

At the dawn of history we find the Celts in the extreme west, according to the geographical notions which prevailed in the days of Herodotus. From the rugged lands which surround the springs of the Ister they appear to have gradually descended towards the Rhine and the Helvetian valleys; whence in process of time they entered Gaul, approached the line of the Alps which separate that country from Italy, and at length presented their armed bands as invaders on the southern side of the mountains and in the plains watered by the Po. These formidable barbarians, whose roving population was not yet attached by the arts of civilized life to any particular soil, are known in the old historians by a variety of names. By Florus, Pliny, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, they are called Ombri, Om-

*I am not ignorant that the opinion stated in the text has been questioned by high authorities, but its truth does not on that account appear altogether untenable. "It is very probable," says an able writer in the *Quarterly Review*, "that the Celts may have picked up a few Semitic words in their progress through Asia, especially from the East Aramean or Chaldee, which has interchanged many vocables with the old Persian, and perhaps with other adjoining dialects; but it would be as easy to trace the bulk of the Celtic languages to Formosa or Madagascar as to the land of Canaan." No. cxiii. p. 81.

brici, and Umbri, and described as the most ancient nation of Italy. Whatever obscurity may be suspended over their origin, there cannot be any reasonable doubt that, at a remote period, they occupied the greatest portion of the country which stretches along the foot of the Alps, and which they seem to have shared for a time with the Ligurians, who were confessedly of Celtic extraction. In historical times, indeed, these last are known to have possessed the upper vale of the Po, the maritime Alps, and the northern Apennines, while the Umbri were confined to the central group of hills, the most important of the natural fortresses of Italy. At an epoch somewhat later, the whole of the original population of the eastern coast was reduced under the power of the Hellenic colonists, who encircled the southern portion of the peninsula with a line of Grecian cities, famed for their wealth and magnificence. Sybaris, Crotona, Elia, and Pæstum still hold their place on the page of history; and respecting the first of them we learn that it was once the chief of twenty-five cities, and could bring into the field three hundred thousand warriors. Sybaris fell five hundred and eight years before the birth of Christ, the victim of internal dissension rather than of foreign violence; and Crotona followed soon after, doomed however to a more lingering death at the hands of the savage Bruttii. The Lucanians, a mountain-tribe which took the lead in these attacks on the Grecian states, had nevertheless imbibed some portion of their civilisation; and as a proof of this fact, it is mentioned that, hereditary enemies as they were, they had acquired the language to such a degree that their ambassador filled the popular assembly at Syracuse with surprise and enthusiasm by his pure Doric.

This reaction of the natives against the foreign colonists, which proved so fatal in the south, was directed with equal energy in the central provinces by the Samnites, who assailed

with great vigour and success both the Grecian settlers and the Tuscan invaders of Campania. The conquerors in this case, too, were like the Lucanians of Sabine race, and by a reference to the best informed of the Roman authors, it may be rendered probable that they were essentially the same people with the Umbrians. Indeed a writer quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, expressly asserts that they were the same. "The Sabines," says he, "who are indigenous, inhabited first the Reatine district, but being driven thence by the Pelasgi, entered that country, which they still inhabit, and having changed their name together with their situation were called Sabini instead of Umbri."*

The next step is to prove that this ancient race was cognate in blood and language with the Cumri of Gaul, Britain, and Ireland. On this point we are supplied with the testimony of Cornelius Bocchus, Antoninus Gripho, and Isodorus, who, resting their judgment on the most authentic records of antiquity, unite in the opinion that the Umbri were the offspring of the ancient Gauls. But the reader will ask who were those "ancient Gauls" who are here represented as the fathers of the Sabines, the Umbrians, and Lucanians? It may be answered, in general terms, that they were sprung from the Celts to whom Herodotus alludes, the roots of whose families in his day might still be found clinging to the northern declivities of the Swiss mountains. Whoever then were the founders of the Roman state, there can be no doubt that Celtic blood was infused at a very early period into the veins of the general population; for as the mothers of the early inhabitants were Sabine women, who, as

* Vol. ii. p. 49. The author cited by Dionysius is Zenodotus of Træzene, who appears to have compiled a history of the Umbrians. See a learned article by Archdeacon Williams on the "Non-Hellenic portion of the Latin Language," inserted in vol. xiii. of the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

well as the Umbrians, were supposed to belong to that ancient people, their children would inherit the lineage, language, and attachments of the Celts.

The opinion of Zenodotus has been just mentioned, importing his belief that the Sabines were descended from the Umbri; and though it is customary to refer them to the Oscan race, there appears no reason, as Cramer has remarked, why the latter people, who are very distinctly classed and defined, should not be considered as sprung from the same indigenous stock; nay, rather, when we consider the analogy which is allowed to exist between the several ancient dialects of Italy, and the uniformity of topographical nomenclature which may be traced throughout a great part of the peninsula, there seems to be a strong argument in favour of such an hypothesis. Considering therefore the Umbri as the most ancient people of Italy, the author of the *Historical Description* attributes to them the population of the central and mountainous parts of that country, as also the primitive form of its language, until the several communities of the Etruscans, Sabines, and Latins successively detached themselves from the parent nation, and from a combination of different elements adopted also different modifications of the same primeval tongue.*

But it ought not to be withheld from the knowledge of the reader that many authors, who admit the identity of the Sabines and Umbrians, refuse nevertheless to concur in the opinion that these nations were descended from the Celts. We have seen that an ancient compiler quoted by Solinus, and Isidorus in his *Origines*, held the affirmative on this question; and we may add, that it has served as a foundation for the systems of Freret and Bardetti, who contend strongly for the Celtic extraction of the Umbri, and consequently of

* A *Geographical and Historical Description of Ancient Italy*, &c. By the Rev. J. A. Cramer, M. A., vol. i. p. 251.

the Sabini. This conclusion, however, is rejected by Cluverius, Maffei, and Cramer, the last of whom remarks, that "any notion of affinity, either in language or customs, between the Umbri and the Celtic Gauls, who peopled France, and afterwards invaded Italy, can hardly be admitted, for it would neither be borne out by facts nor supported by any collateral proof."*

The partisans of Celtic antiquities have encountered another antagonist in the author of "Researches into the Origin and Affinity of the Principal Languages of Europe and Asia," who maintains that not one dialect in either of these divisions of the globe "has been derived from Celtic, or has even the least affinity with it." It follows, according to this statement, that the Latin and Teutonic words, with which the remains of this ancient tongue still abound, are not original, but derived from the people by whom the Celts were conquered, and from whom they received a new religion. He admits, however, the possibility that the Celts, if they ever occupied the whole of Europe, may have gradually receded as they were attacked by a perfectly distinct race of men, and may have left no part of their people in the countries which they were thus compelled to forsake. Hence, he adds, it may be argued, no Celtic words could pass into the language of the conquerors, and consequently their absence, though it may disprove the affinity of the two languages, will not prove that these countries were never possessed by the Celts. But the maintainers of the other hypothesis are prepared to show that almost every name of men, town, mountain, or river, which occurs in ancient authors, and even

* *Mémoires de l'Acad. des Inscriptions*, tome xviii. p. 83; and tome ii. p. 297. *Ital. Antiq.* 593. *Primit. Ital.* p. 115. *Geographical and Historical Description*, vol. i. p. 253. This author observes, "if any dependence is to be placed on the researches of Lanzi, the basis of the Umbrian, as well as of the Latin dialect, is Greek, which is certainly of Slavonic, if I may so term it, rather than of Celtic origin."

of many places at the present day, are pure Celtic, as is demonstrated by their being easily explained by the words of this copious and expressive language.*

The test now mentioned supplies the principle to which appeals are usually made in our times, when etymological writers see the propriety of relinquishing all arguments which have no firmer basis than general reasoning, and to descend at once into the substance of languages, their words, and their grammatical forms. With regard, then, to the point now more immediately under consideration, the researches of Celtic scholars seem assuredly to justify the conclusion, that the people who spoke their language must have occupied a large portion of western Europe, including a broad section of Italy, the Gallic provinces, a great extent of country on both sides of the Rhine, and the British Isles.

But before the Romans began to write, their language had received other elements, and assumed a different basis. The Tyrrhenians, who appear to have existed from an early period on the coast and in the islands of the Egean, made in the course of their predatory expeditions an inroad into Italy; where, having at first assisted the Umbrians to expel the Siculi, they afterwards contributed by their arts and arms to subdue the former, who had employed them as auxiliaries, or invited them as allies. The expulsion of the Siculi is calculated to have taken place about eighty years before the siege of Troy; and hence it has been inferred that the migration of the Tyrrhenians from Greece to the mouths of the Po must have occurred nearly twenty years earlier.

Having obtained possessions in Etruria, they are said to have built, with the aid of the natives, their first twelve cities; and if we conceive this people bringing with them

all the improvements in war, navigation, and the arts, which Greece was then beginning to derive from Egypt and the East, into a country still only partially inhabited and that too by savage clans, we can easily form an idea of the great influence they would exercise over the moral and political condition of Italy. We must suppose them, says Mr Cramer, to have been joined from time to time by numerous bands of Pelasgi, adventurers like themselves, who would flock from different parts of Greece to any country where renown and profit were to be acquired. The Tyrrhenian pirates who had hitherto infested the Egean would naturally retire, when that sea was protected by the navy of Minos, to the Italian coasts, to exercise there the habits which they learned from the Phenicians, and which remained so long a characteristic of their nation. It would appear that they formed settlements on almost every part of the coast washed by the Tyrrhenian gulf. Their colonies in Campania and Lucania, where Pæstum is imagined to have been first founded by them, also sufficiently attest their enterprising spirit. They seem in fact to have spread themselves over a large portion of Italy; and in that sense we might perhaps take the assertion of Livy to be strictly true, that the Tuscan name had reached every part of the peninsula before the arrival of Æneas. But it was in Etruria, properly so called, that the Tyrrheni laid the first foundation of this power, and established under Tarchon their leader a confederacy of twelve cities.*

The Tuscans, profiting perhaps by the arts introduced among them through the Grecian settlers, soon became very

* *Geographical and Historical Description*, vol. i. p. 165. Livii, lib. i. c. 2. v. 33; and Serv. ad *Æn.* lib. xi. v. 567. Mr Cramer notices that the number twelve, as applied to cities, was characteristic of the Pelasgi. It was adopted by the Pelasgi *Ægialees* in Achaia, and was by them transmitted to the Ionians of Asia Minor. Herod. lib. i. c. 146.

powerful, narrowed the borders of the Umbrians, and gradually extended their own territory to the full possession of the plains watered by the Po. In following this successful career, they arrived at length at the shores of the Adriatic, where they seized the settlements of Hadria and Spina, originally founded by the Tyrrhenians, and which, being now too weak to defend them, these last found it necessary to surrender to the invaders.

It is in Etruria, therefore, that we shall best trace the influence of the Tyrrhenian colony in changing the habits and improving the condition of the natives. The numerous monuments which have been discovered in that province diffuse an interesting light over this historical problem, and clearly mark out the place where the Tuscans had their original abode. To the Tyrrheni Cramer is disposed to ascribe that mixture of the religions of Greece and Italy which is known to have obtained in the Etruscan rites; whilst as to the effect of their presence on the language of the country there can be no question, the fact being admitted by ancient as well as modern writers. They are believed to have introduced the Pelasgic characters into Etruria and Umbria, and likewise to have communicated them to the Oscans, whose letters are somewhat more rude and uncouth. Tacitus indeed seems to say that letters were brought by Damaratus of Corinth; but the philosophical annalist is usually interpreted so as to mean that this Greek only improved the Etruscan alphabet by the addition of some characters.*

It belongs to philologists to examine the causes which operated differently in forming the dialects of Etruria and

* Cramer, vol. i. p. 167. Lanzi, *Saggio di Lingua Etrusca*, tom. i. p. 191. Tacitus (*Annal.* lib. xi. c. 14.) expresses himself as follows: "At in Italia Etrusci ab Corinthio Damarato, Aborigines Arcade ab Evandro didicerunt: ea forma litteris Latinis, quæ veterrimis Grecorum. Sed nobis quoque paucæ primum fuere; deinde additæ sunt."

Latium. But it seems that the difference, which at first might not be considerable, gradually increased from the various elements which the latter received into its composition, at a time when the former remained uncultivated and stationary. In proof of this, it has been noticed that the Etruscans preferred the ancient mode of writing from right to left; the Latins, together with new characters, adopted that arrangement which has since generally prevailed.

These are the principal points, says the author to whose research I am indebted for the facts just stated, in which the effects of the Tyrrhenian colony are visible in improving and civilizing Etruria. With respect to particular customs, we are too little acquainted with the history of that country to discriminate what was indigenous from what was borrowed; but it seems sufficient for us to know that they infused a spirit of enterprise and conquest into the nation by whom they had been adopted,—a spirit which long prevailed after the original Tyrrheni had ceased to cherish a separate name, or had removed to other lands. Commerce, and the fine arts, for which this inventive people appear to have had a natural turn, must have added to their refinement, and at length completed their superiority over the other tribes of Italy, still comparatively barbarous; circumstances which will account for their having been distinguished by the Greeks, from the days of Hesiod to those of Thucydides and Aristotle, when Rome was either unknown or was still thought to be a Tyrrhenian city. Whether it was really so may be a matter of speculation; in pursuing which it ought not to be forgotten how much she borrowed from Etruria in forming her religious and political institutions, as well as in the detail of her civil and military economy.*

* Geographical and Historical Description, p. 168. Mr Cramer remarks,
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It is supposed that the Tuscans, had they formed a regular plan for securing their conquests and strengthening their confederacies, would have been the masters of Italy, and occupied, as sovereigns of the western world, the place which was afterwards held by the Romans. But, when a certain period had passed away, their enterprises seem to have been desultory, and their measures ill combined. A fatal want of union which prevailed among their states rendered them an easy prey to the Gauls, who invaded the north of Italy, and to the hardy Samnites, who attacked Campania. Meantime, Rome was aiming at the very heart of their power those systematic and persevering assaults which in her hands were never known to fail. The history of the Tuscans, subsequently to the foundation of the imperial city, is to be gleaned from Livy, and at intervals from short notices in the Greek historians and poets; “but a rich field,” says Cramer, “is still left open to the antiquary, who would illustrate the annals of this interesting people from the monuments that are daily discovered in their country, which seems destined to be the seat of the arts and of good taste through a perpetuity of ages.”*

From the historical outline now presented to the reader, it is manifest that the Umbri, usually esteemed a Celtic nation, were the oldest inhabitants of northern and central Italy; where at a later period they were succeeded by the Etruscans, a people who had received the arts and language of Greece from the Tyrrhenian colonists. Hence it becomes

that the earliest record of the Tyrrhenians in Italy is met with in Hesiod, who supposes Latinus and Agrius to have been their kings;

πῶσιν τυρρηνίοισιν ἀρχακλυτοῖσιν ἄνασσαν.

THEOG. 1615.

See also Thucyd. lib. vii. c. 53. Dionys. Halicar. lib. i. c. 29, lib. iii. c. 60.

* P. 170. On the subject of Etruscan Antiquities, the reader is referred to Dempster's *Etruria Regalis*, with the Supplement of Passeri; Heyne's *Etrusca Antiqua*; Goris *Museum Etruscum*; and the *Italia of Micali*.

extremely probable that the mixture of Celtic vocables with the roots of the Latin tongue originated in the junction of tribes to whom both forms of speech were vernacular; though, it is admitted, there is a want of records extending into those remote times, which it would be in vain to supply by means of conjecture. The Eugubian tables, if they were really Umbrian, might be expected to furnish us with a certain test as to the radical identity of both languages. In this, however, the hopes of the learned have not been realized. The double set of characters, and the very imperfect representation in the Latin tables of the sense contained, or supposed to be contained, in those written in ancient Greek letters, are of themselves a proof that the dialect of the latter was a sacred one, and therefore not to be accounted the ordinary language of the country.*

All the traditions which respect the foundation of Rome imply to a certain extent the elements of Grecian polity and civilisation. The arrival of Evander at the head of his Arcadians, as well as the subsequent voyage of Æneas, necessarily suggest the notion that the language of the eastern peninsula must have been conveyed to the banks of the Tiber. It is not probable indeed that the ancient shepherd, who migrated to Italy sixty years before the Trojan war, actually came from Arcadia, a district which could not in any sense be considered as maritime; he ought therefore unquestionably to be regarded as one of those Pelasgic adventurers, who, after the settlement of the Tyrrheni and the expulsion of the Siculi, removed themselves from Greece into Italy. But the landing of Evander is nevertheless an interesting fact in the history of Latium, as he is said to have introduced a knowledge of letters and other arts with which the natives were then unacquainted.†

* Williams on the Non-Hellenic Portion of the Latin Language, p. 22.

† Geographical and Historical Description of Ancient Italy, vol. i. p. 353.

Rome had been some centuries in existence before any writer arose who had sufficient command of language or of monuments to narrate the history of her origin. The oldest compilers of Roman antiquities were authors who used the Greek tongue, such as Antiochus of Syracuse, Timæus, Alcimius, and Philistus; and these having no documents worthy of implicit confidence, were obliged to satisfy themselves with such traditions as had descended to their age from periods long antecedent to the foundation of the city. It was from them that Diodorus Siculus is supposed to have borrowed the chief portion of his materials relative to the early state of Italy. Rome is mentioned for the first time by Scylax, the geographer, who is understood to have written about the time of Pericles; but it is a remarkable fact that it was not known to Aristotle, if a judgment may be formed from the omission of all reference to that celebrated capital in any part of his works. The volumes of Theopompus, Theophrastus, and Clitarchus, who flourished about the same period with the philosopher, contain the earliest allusion to the Romans as a distinct people, and as just beginning to acquire an ascendancy over the other nations who divided with them the possession of the country.

Relinquishing all farther investigation into the origin of the European languages, I repeat once more the remark by which the inquiry was suggested; namely, it was not till the middle of the eighth century before the Christian era that writing became common either among the Hebrews or the Gentile nations with whom they were connected. The earliest writers in prose known to the Greeks were Pherecydes of Syros, and Cadmus of Miletus, who lived at least two hundred and fifty years after Homer; and no author confining himself to that species of composition obtained much celebrity till about half a century later. The interval, therefore, between the first introduction of letters and any familiar

use of them, was by the most moderate computation considerably above four hundred years.

The slow progress of this very useful art among a people so ingenious may, on first view, appear extraordinary, and yet there are circumstances which amply account for it. The want of convenient materials for writing, as already mentioned, might alone explain it; when, instead of pen and paper, the chisel was to be employed on blocks of marble, or the graver on plates of brass. But to this must be added the consideration, that the oriental characters could not without difficulty be made applicable to the speech of the Greeks. There were sounds, even in the most refined dialects of Asia, which could not be uttered by the inhabitants of Peloponnesus or of the neighbouring isles. Hence it would become necessary to invent new letters, or at least to modify the application of the old; changes which, though they might soon be completed, would yet be long in gaining the necessary authority of popular use, in a nation only half-polished and at the same time divided into numerous independent states. The details given by Herodotus supply an entire confirmation of these views. He relates that the Cadmeans at first used letters exactly after the Phenician manner; but that afterwards, as their language received alterations, they found it necessary to change the power of some of the characters. Examples of such modifications could still be distinctly marked in his day; and in this altered state they passed to the Ionian Greeks of Attica and the adjacent provinces.

The age of literature in other nations coincided very nearly with that of the Greeks. Tradition, no doubt, asserts that the Assyrians had letters before the succession of time was noted among the dwellers of the west; and it is certain that some species of writing was practised by the Egyptians and ancient Hebrews at the remotest periods comprehended within the range of sacred history. Still there is no evidence that

this art had any where extended to the body of the people prior to the era of the Olympiads ; an epoch which synchronizes with the decline of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and when also the practical use of letters appears to have descended to the lower class in both nations.

China, after the fashion of all Asiatic empires, boasts an immense antiquity, and yet her historical age cannot be carried farther back than to the period when Shalmaneser reduced Samaria ; that is, the century in which Rome was built, and the Greeks instituted their periodical games at Olympia. This powerful and civilized people, whose origin, according to a probable tradition, ascends above forty centuries, are able to verify a series of nearly two thousand years by the unbroken testimony of accurate and contemporary historians. As Gibbon remarks, the era of the Chinese monarchy has been variously fixed from 2952 to 2132 years before Christ ; the difference arising from the uncertain duration of the two first dynasties, and the vacant space that lies beyond them as far as the real or fabulous times of Fo-hi or Hoang-ti. Se-ma-tsien dates his authentic chronology from the year 841 ; “ but,” says the author of the “ Decline and Fall,” “ the *historical period* of China does not ascend above the Greek Olympiads.”

Confucius, the most illustrious of Chinese philosophers, is said to have compiled the historical work called Shoo-king, which continued to be held in great veneration till the reign of Chi-hoang-ti, who, about two centuries before the birth of the Messias, issued a decree that all the annals of the empire should be committed to the flames. But sixty years afterwards, a ruler possessed of more enlightened views anxiously endeavoured to repair this heavy loss ; and diligent search was made throughout all the provinces for whatever remains might exist of the sacred compilation. The emperor Han-ou-ti, pursuing the same patriotic ob-

ject, offered a reward to all who should procure authentic materials relative to the early events and times of their native country. A body of learned men were appointed to examine and verify such documents as might be collected ; and it was on this occasion that Se-ma-tsien was employed to draw from the recovered records a confirmation of the Shoo-king, as well as to supply its deficiencies.

Subsequently to this period the history of the empire, it is maintained, has been written with great regularity ; and of all the works produced, none bears a higher reputation than the Tse-tchi-tong-kien, that is the “ Mirror in which may be contemplated the true government of a state.” It is said to have been composed by an association of able men, and to embrace a complete narrative from the year 208 before Christ to A. D. 960, together with an introductory view of the principal events beginning at the foundation of the monarchy. Its value was still farther increased a hundred years later by the crude Tchu-hi, who drew up a summary of the whole, called the Kang-mou, which was thenceforth considered as the text, while the original was viewed in the light of a commentary. The two works were then known by the descriptive title of the Tong-kien-kang-mou. About the middle of the seventeenth century, Kang-hi, an enlightened prince, sprung from the conquering race of the Mantchou Tartars, being desirous of affording to his original subjects a knowledge of the extensive regions they had subdued, gave orders that this large body of facts should be translated into their tongue. While the version was in progress, Mailla, a Jesuit missionary, who happened to reside at Pe-king and understood both languages, took upon himself the laborious task of turning it into French. His manuscript was transmitted to France in 1737 ; but, in consequence of the subversion of his order and other unfavourable circumstances, it remained in a library at Lyons till the year 1777, when it was

published by the industrious Abbé Grosier in thirteen quarto volumes.

It is well known that the origin of the Chinese, like that of the other Asiatic nations, is lost in the depths of the most remote antiquity, and has often been made the subject of long but very obscure discussion. Sir William Jones endeavoured to prove that they were the descendants of the Cshatryas, a military caste in Hindostan called Chinas. But this hypothesis, as well as those which trace their extraction to the Egyptians and Jews, seems unworthy of a serious refutation; it being much more probable that they originally sprang from a Tartar or rather Mongolian lineage. The form and prominent features of the countenance are in both nearly similar, and strikingly different from those of any other race.

The Chinese, like the Hindoos and Egyptians, have a fabulous chronology, comprehending a vast number of ages, and also a succession of dynasties who, in their order, governed heaven, demigods, and men. But the first dawn of authentic history, as already indicated, commences with the government of Fo-hi, about 2953 B. C.; a period which accords sufficiently with the most approved system of dates. For some time the imperfection of their records is made manifest by the undue length of the reigns; and it is not till the accession of Yu, of the Hia dynasty, that lives of the ordinary duration give evidence of their narrative being at length placed on a solid basis. Although, therefore, the annals of the country, even from Fo-hi to Yu, are tinged with fable, they may nevertheless be received as conveying a tolerably correct idea of what the people were in early times; and as the picture is very little flattering to their pride, it is the less likely to have been the spontaneous offspring of their imagination. It represents them, at the period they settled in the province of Shen-see, as almost complete sa-

vages, subsisting either on the undressed fruits of the earth, or on the raw flesh of animals killed in hunting, the skins of which served them for clothing. They were strangers to all the arts, to every form of social union, and to every idea which could raise the man above the brute ; and it is worthy of notice, that the means by which they were rescued from this state, and introduced to a course of improvement, constitute the principal subject of their earliest annals. Soui-gin-chi made a step towards the formation of permanent records by the use of knots tied upon a small string ; a process without doubt analogous to that of the *quipos* found among the native inhabitants of Peru. This benefactor of his country was succeeded on the throne by Fo-hi, already brought before the reader, whose memory is still venerated as the founder of regular government and civilisation, as well as the patron of every useful science. He concentrated all his energies in the attempt to devise some method of committing ideas to writing ; and yet we are told, that all he was able to accomplish terminated in the *koua*, an instrument consisting of eight lines, varying only in length, and which, when arranged in a certain order, formed sixty-four combinations capable of expressing an equal number of simple conceptions.

It was reserved for Hoang-ti, also already mentioned, to create for the Chinese a written language. This task, it is related in a style of mixed fable and ridicule, was intrusted to a learned sage, who, happening to walk along the banks of a river, observed on the sand the footsteps of numerous birds. With a pencil dipped in a species of varnish he contrived to copy the lines formed by these impressions, and to frame others like them ; delineating in this manner five hundred and forty characters, by means of which he undertook to represent all the objects of nature and art. Hence, we are taught to believe, originated the Chinese method of writing ; and the object of it, from which indeed it has

never entirely deviated, was to draw the outline of every thing that it was employed to express.

Various efforts appear to have been made by succeeding monarchs in the course of ten centuries, but with so small a degree of success as not to deserve the attention of historians. About eight hundred years before Christ the empire was distracted by a revolutionary spirit among the subordinate princes, who asserted their right to a species of independence quite inconsistent with the stability of the supreme government. Tching-ouang, the first of the Tcheou dynasty, found it necessary to yield to their pretensions so far as to allow the assumption of regal titles, and the exercise of a separate power still nominally subordinate to his own. The wars of these tributary sovereigns lasted nearly five hundred years, interrupted only by short intervals of repose, or by the invasion of the Tartar tribes, who already longed for a share of their fertile lands. During this period China, which had formerly enjoyed great peace under the sway of one ruler, was agitated by the most furious commotions, and partitioned into a multitude of petty states. At length, the fierce and warlike Tchao-siang-ouang, having gained a succession of victories over those turbulent potentates, reduced them all to obedience for a season; leaving to his brother the glory of extinguishing the dynasty of Tcheou, and of founding one which, deriving its name from his hereditary possessions, is known in history under the denomination of Tsin.*

It was during these troubles that a wise mandarin addressed his imperial master the following indirect admonition:—"An emperor owes how to govern when he leaves poets at liberty to make verses, the poor to act plays, historians to tell the truth, the ministers to give advice the poor to murmur while they pay taxes, students to repeat their lessons and, the people to talk of news, and old men to find fault with every thing affairs then go on without much inconvenience."—*Murray's Historic and Descriptive Account of China*, vol. i. p. 59, an able and instructive work.

From the eighth to the third century before our era, a period marked by great political dissension, the progress of letters and of the intellectual powers gained a more distinguished triumph than in any former age. Confucius and Mencius—the Kong-fou-tse and Ming-tse of the natives—attained unrivalled eminence as scholars; and their works gave to the Chinese mind the character which it has ever since exhibited, both as to theories of general knowledge and rules of moral conduct. This epoch, I need not remark, corresponds with that in which the Greeks and Romans are likewise seen advancing into the first ranks with respect as well to arms as to literature, and when the Hebrews also appear to have arrived at a greater command over written language than at any antecedent stage of their existence as a nation.

It was reserved for Chi-hoang-ti to complete the subjection of the independent princes. These proud dynasties, which had so long defied the supreme authority, were now extinguished in blood; and the unrelenting victor, not satisfied with their submission, sought to extirpate every root of their name and lineage. On this account he has sometimes been considered the founder of the Chinese empire as it is at present constituted; for even prior to the civil wars and anarchy just mentioned, the monarch, generally speaking, only reigned over the central provinces, and was compelled to rest satisfied with a certain homage, tribute, or service, from his viceroys. A new division of the country was made, and governors were appointed entirely subservient to the court, instead of those members of the royal family to whom the local administration had usually been intrusted, and who were ever ready to countenance insurrection against their chief. He forced the people every where to give up the arms in their possession, and obliged all suspected persons, whose influence might prove dangerous, to reside in the capital. To restore the dignity and magnificence which he

thought indispensable to the imperial office, he employed 800,000 men in the erection of splendid palaces; whilst, to protect his northern frontier against the irruptions of the Tartars, he enlarged and completed that stupendous work, the Great Wall, which defines the limits of the empire for not less than fifteen hundred miles. He repelled with equal vigour and success the assaults of the Huns, who were every day becoming more formidable, and who had not yet learned to find an outlet for their increasing hordes in western Asia and on the confines of Europe.

But it is to the memory of this warlike sovereign that the odium attaches of the attempt, noticed above, to eradicate the seeds of knowledge, and to defeat all the efforts which his predecessors had made to procure learning for China. This conduct, it has been already suggested, is generally understood to have arisen from the absurd vanity of bequeathing his name to future ages as the founder of the empire. Besides this motive, the despot might be influenced by the policy, said to have been pressed upon him by his ministers, of throwing a veil over the events of the last five centuries. To one who sought to rule with absolute sway, the authority long exercised by the multitude of independent princes called up recollections which he must have been desirous to suppress. The singular honour, too, in which philosophers and historians had been held, especially since the days of Confucius; their free access to the interior of courts; and the boldness with which they were accustomed to comment on public affairs, rendered them odious in his eyes. Impelled by these feelings, he gave full loose to his jealous rage. Four hundred and sixty learned men, the most illustrious in his dominions, were condemned to the dreadful punishment of being buried alive. The fatal mandate had been previously issued for delivering into his hands the Shoo-king, and all other works on the Chinese nation which

could preserve the memory of past events ; and these, it has been said, were committed to the flames with every emotion of triumph and without the slightest reserve.*

Whatever might be the motives of this determined ruler, he failed in his efforts to secure a permanent throne in his own family, the great object of his ambition, his labours, and his crimes. His son, a weak prince, had the mortification to see most of the small states which had been humbled during the previous reign spring up anew, and assert their wonted independence of the imperial crown. Amidst the wars which ensued, Lieon-pang, the chief of an obscure village, had the address and talent to quash this rebellion ; to bring to a close the unpopular dynasty of Tsin ; to place himself on the throne ; and, under the name of Kao-hoang-ti, to establish a new race of sovereigns, who have been considered as one of the most illustrious that ever swayed the Chinese sceptre.

The accession of this able monarch, the first of the Han family, constitutes an epoch in the history of China. From this date,—about two centuries before Augustus Cæsar,—the annals of the kingdom have been kept with greater care ; for Lieon-pang, though himself illiterate, felt so much the importance of learning, that he invited scholars and philosophers to his court. In this respect his successors followed his example, particularly Han-ou-ti, an enlightened sovereign, under whom, we have seen, every branch of science was honoured and its professors elevated to the highest ranks. An invitation was issued to the literary exiles, amounting to several thousands, many of whom hastened to court, where the most meritorious of them were raised to offices of distinction. Not only were all the proscriptions against historical study

* In a former part of this volume an allusion is made to the suspicion entertained by some European writers that the account given by the Chinese of the destruction of their ancient literature was meant to cover their poverty of genius, and to supply an apology for their want of ancient writings.

removed, but the measures formerly adopted for recovering the Shoo-king and other ancient records were resumed with the utmost zeal.*

It has no doubt occurred to the reader, that the date assigned for the origin of the Chinese empire coincides very nearly with the commencement of the Assyrian monarchy as determined by the most accurate chronologers. But it is manifest, at the same time, that no records remain on which any certain conclusion could be founded: nor can we trace in those remote ages any connection with other countries, whence we might correct our reasoning as to the course of events. Dr Shuckford, who was pleased to identify Noah with the emperor Fo-hi, raises the patriarch to the throne of China three thousand nine hundred and forty-nine years ago; taking care, however, to inform us that this was not the first kingdom which the antediluvian sage erected, as prior to this achievement he had been two hundred and thirty-five years out of the ark. "He might begin in countries not so far east as China at the time when part of his descendants removed westwards towards Shinaar."†

There are no traces of any direct intercourse with the Hebrews before the captivity, though it is not improbable that the trade carried on between India and the Red sea comprehended several articles conveyed to the former country from China. The manufacturers of Tyre and Sidon are supposed to have used in their fabrics rough silk, called

* From the facts mentioned above, the remark of Gibbon will appear well founded, that the *historical period* of China does not ascend above the Greek Olympiads. In fact it can hardly be traced higher than the third century before the era of Christian Redemption. See "L'Antiquité des Chinois," in "Mémoires concernant les Chinois," tome ii.; and "Abregé Chronologique de l'Histoire Universelle de l'Empire de la Chine," *ibid.* tome xiii.; "Chronologie Chinoise" (edited by Silvestre de Sacy); "Histoire des Huns," &c. tome i.; "Du Halde's History of China;" and "Edinburgh Cabinet Library," vol. xviii.

† Sacred and Profane History Connected, vol. ii. p. 158.

metaxa or organzine, imported by their traders long before the nature of the material or the animal which produces it was perfectly known. The ancients imagined that it was obtained from the leaves of trees ; and hence the description given by Virgil :

“ Velleraque ut foliis depectant tenuia Seres.”

Pausanias imagined that he was revealing an important discovery when he stated that “ the thread from which the Seres form their web is not from any kind of bark, but is obtained in a different way ; they have in their country a spinning insect which the Greeks call Seer.” In truth, it was from the name of the worm that the Chinese were by the western nations denominated Seres ; and there is no doubt that the artists of Tyre introduced the precious ingredient into their dresses at a very early period. Perhaps, too, the “ Babylonish garments,” so much prized by the Jewish ladies, owed part of their excellence to the insect of China, though they might be ignorant of the channel through which the productions of the farthest East were conveyed to the banks of the Euphrates.*

It is proved by history that, at a very early period in the intercourse of nations, a trade was established between the people of Asia and those who dwelt on the coasts of the Red sea. The merchants from Arabia met others in the western parts of India, who had come from the more eastern provinces ; these last are imagined to have had commercial relations with a country still nearer to the rising sun, called the Golden Chersonesus ; which in its turn traded with China, then described under different names, and beyond whose territories no man was ever reported to have travelled

* Pausan. Eliac. ii. Hesychius in voce Σησερ. D'Anville, Antiq. de l'Inde, p. 233. Dr Vincent on the Navigation of the Ancients, vol. ii. p. 585—598.

by land or sailed by water. These traditions respecting the regions of cinnamon, cassia, and silk, had reached the ears of the ancient geographers, though without any knowledge of the inhabitants, their manners, or institutions. To the Greeks and Romans, at all events, China was utterly unknown. She had made considerable progress in civilisation, and the classic era of her philosophers was already passed, when these nations were only beginning to emerge from barbarism. Nay, the greatest men who flourished during the memorable age of Grecian wisdom seem to have been wholly ignorant that such an empire existed. The first mention of Thina in any of their works is to be found in the treatise *De Mundo* ascribed to Aristotle; but there is no distinct notice of it till the time of Eratosthenes, who lived under the second Ptolemy, king of Egypt; whence we may infer that the Greeks had no knowledge of so distant a country before the reign of Alexander, and that they became acquainted with it only in consequence of his celebrated expedition.*

The event now mentioned made a remarkable addition to the geographical science of the Greeks. They learned from the studious men who had accompanied the Macedonian conqueror that, beyond the Persian empire and the provinces watered by the Indus, there were extensive and very fertile lands on the banks of a still mightier river, and which stretched eastward to seas yet unvisited by the boldest mariners. But these glimpses were not sufficient to dispel the darkness which continued to cover the vast regions that were thought to extend from the left bank of the Ganges. The name of Thinae reached their ears, supposed to be a great city placed near the mysterious ocean which marked

* *Navigation of the Ancients*, vol. ii. p. 576. Aristotle died B. C. 322; Eratosthenes was born B. C. 276.

the farthest limits of Asia. The most exaggerated rumours appear to have been circulated with respect to its splendour: it was represented as being enclosed by brazen walls, and as containing many wonders which the more judicious did not hesitate to denounce as fabulous. An extraordinary interest, however, was still felt, and faint intimations respecting it occasionally penetrated across the wide continent which separates China from the nearest parts of Europe. These notices became much more clear and intelligible when Rome, in the plenitude of her power, opened an intercourse with the distant quarters of the globe. The country of the Seres and Sinaë—for both names were applied to them—became objects of curiosity, second only to the concealed rivers and fabled monsters of Africa. All the accounts, however, which at that imperfect stage of commerce and seamanship could be obtained of a kingdom approachable only by travelling through the most savage wildernesses, or by winding along dangerous shores, were necessarily tinged with error and perplexed by contradictory statements; and hence, after all the pains bestowed upon the narratives of the early voyagers, it remains in numerous cases extremely doubtful what coasts they actually visited, and what regions they really meant to describe.

Some of the remarks just made apply to India not less suitably than to the Chinese empire; for to the Greeks and Romans the two countries appeared nearly in the same light, as remote and almost inaccessible regions. The extensive seas which intervened were, in the infant state of navigation, considered nearly impassable; whilst the inland route, besides its great length and the imperfect means of conveyance, lay either across the loftiest ridge of mountains in the world, or through deserts sufficient to appal the firmest resolution. India nevertheless possessed properties which even at this vast distance attracted the attention of the most civilized

nations of antiquity. Its wealth and other resources made it one of the principal objects of ambition to those great conquerors who aimed at universal empire; its manufactures, the most beautiful that human art any where produced, were sought by traders at the expense of the greatest toils and perils; and the manners of the people, as well as the doctrines of their sages, presented features so original and peculiar as to excite in an unusual degree the curiosity of philosophical inquirers. For these reasons Hindostan, from the first moment that it became known to the wandering merchant down to the present day, has continued to possess a deep interest in the minds of Europeans.

The Sacred Volume, which contains the most ancient of our historical records, supplies no statement whence we might conclude that the Hebrew kingdoms had arrived at any knowledge of India. The Euphrates—called by way of eminence “the River”—and the provinces immediately beyond it long appeared to them the remotest objects in the east, and are accordingly described by their authors under the appellation of the “ends of the earth.” Yet the same inspired books make a direct allusion to the distant journeys performed by the caravans; those mercantile associations which were formed in the earliest days comprehended by history, for conveying the precious commodities of that opulent region into the countries of the west. We cannot hesitate to believe that the embroidered work and chests of rich apparel, mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel as brought from Haran, Caneh, and other towns on the Assyrian border and the Persian gulf, were drawn from the more civilized nations of eastern Asia. Nor is it less evident that the goods carried through Arabia in the line of Dedan and Idumea, and of which “precious cloths” are specified as one of the ordinary articles, were manufactured in India.*

* See above, p. 176. Ezekiel xxvii. 12—27.

It is in vain that we search among the secular historians for any addition to the information supplied by the Holy Scriptures. In the classic mythology a personage, whose real name is concealed under the designation of Bacchus, is famed as the conqueror of India; but the legend in which his exploits are recorded, though probably not destitute of some foundation, is so enveloped in fable that it is now impossible to separate the facts from their fanciful accompaniments. A similar doubt clouds the narrative which describes the career of Sesostris beyond the Persian dominions; and it must for ever remain undetermined whether he crossed the Indus, or proceeded at once through Media and Armenia into the nations that border on the Caspian sea. Nor does the enterprise of Semiramis contribute with greater certainty to the stores of historical knowledge; for though the particulars which are embodied by Diodorus Siculus cannot be altogether rejected, they rest not on such authority as to command our entire confidence.

The invasion effected by Darius comes to us through a less suspicious channel; and our belief is accordingly due to Herodotus, when he assures us that the Persian king reached the Indus, and despatched his admiral Scylax down the stream, in order to examine its banks; to ascertain the point where it falls into the ocean; and to survey the coast westward until he should enter the Arabian gulf. But when he relates that the invader "subdued the Indians," we find it necessary to qualify his assertion, and to restrict the successes of his hero to the western provinces of Moultan, Lahore, and probably Guzerat. The famous inroad of Alexander, who was accompanied by men of letters, was the means of procuring to the Greeks a more intimate acquaintance with eastern manners and pursuits than they had previously attained; and the reader will find in Arrian and Quintus Curtius a variety of details, which, though super-

seded by the more accurate knowledge of modern times, will never entirely lose their interest in the estimation of the politician and philosopher. These, however, as they belong to an age long subsequent to the Babylonian captivity, do not come within the range to which my undertaking is limited.*

To pursue such inquiries farther would be inconsistent with the object of this chapter, which professes to set forth the condition of the world, as to learning and civilisation, at the period when the Hebrew kingdoms were subdued by the Assyrians, and their inhabitants carried into captivity. It has been found that, about the middle of the eighth century, before the introduction of the Christian faith, the light and power of literature began to make themselves felt on the great mass of society wherever the political body was regularly constituted. The use of letters was no longer confined to the sacred orders nor limited to a special purpose. Whatever might be the origin of alphabetical signs, and whether we are to regard them as the fruit of human ingenuity or the result of divine interposition, it is manifest that they were now employed in the common intercourse of life, as well as for the dissemination of uninspired learning. That era, therefore, marks a great stage in the advancement of our species on the confines of Europe and western Asia,—an approach towards the fulness of time destined in the counsels of Providence for still richer fruits of knowledge and wisdom,—and may therefore be regarded as the commencement of a cycle which has ever since moved on and still continues to revolve. Before the torch, which shed a

* Diod. Sicul. lib. ii. c. 49—62. Herodot. Melpomene, c. 43—45. Vincent's Navigation of the Ancients. Nearchus, p. 275, and Periplus, p. 178. The learned Dean, it is well known, doubts the voyage of Scylax, because it has no collateral evidence, and produced no consequences. See also Edinburgh Cabinet Library, vol. vi. p. 49; and this volume at pp. 201, 202.

true though feeble radiance over the night of the ancient world, was taken out of the hands of Abraham's posterity another was prepared for the Gentiles, in order to prevent the return of total darkness over all the earth; and it has accordingly appeared that the same epoch which witnessed the declension of Israel and Judah as independent kingdoms, beheld the rise of the Greeks, and also the first stirrings of social life among the various tribes which afterwards composed the Roman empire.

The same beneficial effects would not have been produced had the Jewish captivity taken place at an earlier period. A century before the reign of Zedekiah, the children of Israel would not have carried with them a sufficient stock of literature, whether for the purpose of diffusing among the heathen the rays of the purer light which had already illumined the land of Judea, or of deriving from the people of the East the elements of their physical science. It is now impossible to determine how much the philosophers of Greece, who travelled into the Assyrian dominions in search of knowledge, owed to the Hebrew exiles, who had previously conveyed thither an outline of their ancient history; an account of the cosmogony as taught in their sacred books; of the origin of evil as connected with the fall; of the flood sent upon the earth to punish the sins of mankind; and of the renewal of the human race from the progeny of one family who had been miraculously preserved. The speculations of Pythagoras and the doctrines of Plato have always been supposed to exhibit a strong resemblance to certain of the more remarkable tenets recorded in the Mosaical writings; whilst, on the other hand, the narratives of the Grecian sages are acknowledged to contain allusions to important events and transactions in the early annals of the world, which could not, it is probable, have reached their ears but through the medium of the Pentateuch.

Again, with reference to Christianity, the dispersion of the Hebrews, after being instructed by the writings of the most eloquent of their prophets, contributed in no small degree to realize the gracious designs contemplated by the new economy. Scattered over the provinces of western Asia, Egypt, and along the shores of Africa, they proved, by means of their traditions and expectations, highly instrumental in preparing the minds of men for that great change which the advent of the Messiah was destined to produce upon all the civilized regions of the earth. In this respect they laboured for others, while in too many instances they neglected themselves ; and accordingly, when the era of the incarnation arrived, it was found that though wise men came from the East to present their homage to the Prince of Peace, the native children of his kingdom, generally speaking, were not disposed to receive him. Still there were Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven, who flocked to Jerusalem to witness the miracles of the rising faith, and who carried back with them into the dark realms of paganism the assurance that the promises made to the ancient Israel were at length fulfilled. There were Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, and in the parts of Lybia, about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians.*

* Acts ii. 5--11.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE THEOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF THE HEBREWS; ITS NATURE, OBJECT, AND DURATION; WITH A SHORT REVIEW OF THE OPINIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ENTERTAINED RESPECTING IT.

It is not easy to make a distinction between the general superintendence which is exercised by Divine Wisdom over the affairs of men, and that more special providence which has for its object the accomplishment of certain designs through the medium of a particular nation or family. That the Hebrews enjoyed the countenance and direction of Jehovah in a manner not extended to any of the contemporary kingdoms, is a fact which was not only asserted by themselves but is also admitted by every order of Christian writers who do not deny the inspiration of the Scriptures. There is not, however, the same unanimity with regard to the precise nature of that control under which the posterity of Abraham were placed, nor respecting the sanctions by which it was enforced.

The term theocracy seems to have been first used by Josephus, who very justly considered the government under

which his countrymen so long existed, as not only different from the usual polity of nations, but in most respects as positively miraculous. The sovereignty of the great Creator over the human race has by some authors been distinguished into *natural* and *civil*; the former implying that rule which is extended indiscriminately to all the subjects of his moral dominion, while the latter is restricted to the case of the Israelites to whom the Almighty condescended to reveal himself as their lawgiver and king. The nature of such an interposition, which has not always even by orthodox writers been described with the reverence due to a divine appointment, will be most clearly understood by contemplating the *object* which it was meant to secure.*

It is admitted, then, on all hands, that the separation of the Hebrews at the early period when they were placed under the charge of Moses, was meant to preserve among men the knowledge of the one true God, and to institute a system of worship suitable to this belief in the divine unity. To realize this important purpose, and to counteract the strong propensity which every where prevailed to idolatrous usages, Jehovah declared to the chosen people that he was not only Lord of heaven and earth, but also the king of their tribes: claiming on this ground their entire veneration, and at the same time prohibiting, under the severest penalties, the slightest obeisance to any other deity, whether representing a celestial power or a terrestrial form.

* Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. ii. c. 17. Θεοκρατίαν ἀπὸ τοῦ τοῦ πολιτεύματος,
Θεοῦ μάλιστα his great work
 De Legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus, remark —“*Theo- tia vero nomine,*
Dei monarchiam aut imperium intelligo, quæ in naturalem et civilem dis-
tribui potest. Monarchia Dei naturalis, ea est quæ jure creationis et
omnipotentiae suæ Dco convenit, quamque in omnes creaturas, a prima rerum
origine, naturaliter exercuit, et semper exercebit: civili ea est, quam
Deus inter Israelitas tenebat, jure solennis pacti, quo nomen Regis inter
cos, et rerum omnium arbitrium, certa conditione, Deo deferabatur.”—Dis-
sertatio de Theocratia Judaica. Prefat. Opera, vol. i. p. 226.

The Israelites, when in Egypt, being accustomed to the notion of tutelary gods,—divinities who were imagined to preside over different sections of the earth or separate provinces of nature,—were therefore not altogether unprepared for the distinction in the attributes of the Almighty, propounded to them by Moses, considered at once as the creator of the universe and the patron of a particular class of human beings. In this principle, which if it did not seem inherent in our race we should pronounce unnatural as well as absurd, they saw the whole of mankind agree; and were, on that account, led to believe it must be the source of great advantage to all who regularly reduced it to practice. Such a persuasion, however, while it prompted them to acquiesce in the polity proposed by their inspired lawgiver, was the main cause of their subsequent deviations from the terms of the divine covenant; because, being inured to the tenet of local deities, they could not divest themselves of the impression that their mode of adoration must depend upon the geographical position of the country they should happen to occupy, and on the character of the god to whose care it might be confided. On no other ground is it possible to explain the facility with which they adopted the gross superstitions and contemptible idolatries of the several nations by whom they were surrounded, or whose lands they were authorized to seize.

The compact by which the Hebrews bound themselves in allegiance to Jehovah as their king, is described in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus. When the tribes, after witnessing the tremendous miracle of the Red sea, had arrived at mount Sinai, the Lord said unto Moses, “ Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed,

and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people ; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." This message being delivered by the inspired legate to the elders of the congregation, and maturely considered by the whole body, " all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

In this arrangement there was unquestionably a certain accommodation to the prejudices of the age, and more especially to those of the mixed multitude who followed Moses out of Egypt. The remark made by St Paul with reference to the whole system of Levitical ordinances, may also be applied to the covenant made at Horeb ; " it was added because of transgressions." The unity of the divine nature was recognised by Abraham, and might even be described as the characteristic doctrine of his family ; but the long residence of his descendants in a kingdom where their eyes were familiarized to all the tokens of a dominant polytheism, made it necessary that they should be " shut up unto the faith" by the bonds of a more solemn and personal obligation. The acknowledgment of Jehovah as their sovereign, though proceeding on a distinction altogether arbitrary, placed them nevertheless under the sanction of a law which addressed their fears not less than their conscience ; for as the great Being to whom they professed fealty as their king, was at the same time the object of all worship, secret as well as public, they could not commit one act of idolatry without exposing themselves to the punishment of treason.

By the constitution of the Hebrew government, the civil and municipal statutes of the nation were not only founded upon their religious belief ; they were also so framed as to have the support of that belief for their main object. Alluding to the severe penalties denounced against the adoration of false gods, Mr Locke, in his Letter concerning Toleration, observes,

“ as to the case of the Israelites in the Jewish commonwealth, who being initiated into the Mosaical rites and made citizens of the commonwealth, did afterwards apostatize from the worship of the God of Israel ; these were proceeded against as traitors and rebels, guilty of no less than high treason. For the commonwealth of the Jews, different in that from all others, was an absolute theocracy ; nor was there, nor could there be, any difference between the commonwealth and the church. The laws established there concerning the worship of the one invisible Deity were the civil laws of that people, and a part of their political government in which God himself was the legislator.”*

Granting that the object of this peculiar polity—the separation of the Jewish people as depositaries of theological truth—was worthy of the divine interposition, it will be admitted that the means employed were well calculated to secure the end proposed. It is manifest, as Warburton expresses it, that a “ *separation* so necessary to preserve the doctrine of the unity could not have been supported without *penal laws* against idolatry ; and, at the same time, that such penal laws can never be equitably instituted but under a theocracy.” In short, as the object was special, so the means employed to accomplish it were likewise special.

* Locke's Works, vol. ii. p. 247, folio. Mr Locke adds, “ Now, if any one can show me where there is a commonwealth at this time constituted upon that foundation, I will acknowledge that the ecclesiastical laws do there become a part of the civil ; and that the subjects of that government both may and ought to be kept in strict conformity with that church by the civil power. But there is absolutely no such thing under the gospel as a christian commonwealth. There are indeed many cities and kingdoms that have embraced the faith of Christ, but they have retained their ancient form of government ; with which the law of Christ hath not at all meddling. He indeed hath taught men how by faith and good works they may attain eternal life. But he instituted no commonwealth. He prescribed unto his followers no new and peculiar form of government, nor put he the sword into any magistrate's hand, with commission to make use of it in forcing men to forsake their former religion and receive his.”

The Israelites, owing to their habits of thinking, could be made to understand their relations to Jehovah, considered as their own patron and king, much more distinctly than if he had been represented to them in his higher character as Lord of the universe ; and it deserves to be noticed, that while in the former capacity he describes himself as a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, in the latter he announces his attributes as gracious and full of compassion, as good to every creature, and extending his mercy over all his works. It was, says the author of the *Divine Legation of Moses*, in the “indulgence of their prejudices concerning a tutelary god,” that the Almighty instituted a theocracy ; and upon the basis of this system he raised prohibitory enactments against all intercourse with the heathen in matters of faith or worship, and even against the most distant approach to toleration. It is well known that among the gods of paganism there was an avowed affinity both as to origin and pretension ; that their titles were sometimes used in common ; and that, on certain occasions they did not refuse to allow their votaries to join in the licentious rites by which their power was recognised or their beneficence acknowledged. But in this respect the Hebrews were put under a severe restriction ; and, from the moment they consented to venerate Jehovah as the protector of their nation, they were not permitted to extend a look of reverence to any other divinity.

Nor was the rule now stated, considered by the leaders of the Jewish host as a mere abstract principle, intended solely to regulate their sentiments in the practice of devotion. On the contrary, it was made the foundation of all their political institutions, and appeared in all their ecclesiastical usages. For example, the tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple at Jerusalem were considered as the palace of their invisible sovereign, whose commands they were bound to obey,

and whose anger they were frequently taught to dread. No measure of any importance was determined without his consent revealed through a particular channel. When war seemed inevitable, the high priest consulted the holy oracle, and the voice which proceeded from it guided the counsels of the chiefs of the people. Jehovah was understood to lead their army in the intricacies of the march as well as in the dreadful strife of the battle. The royal tent directed their footsteps through the desert; and from thence, when the cloud rose or fell, was the signal given whether they were to advance or whether they were to halt. “And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night.”—“And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.”*

So far as the Almighty could be regarded as the sovereign of the Hebrew people, the priests and Levites who attended the temple, the place of his presence, were to be considered as the ministers of his government, political as well as religious. To them was intrusted the execution of the law civil and ceremonial; to them it belonged to declare who were clean and who were unclean; who should be shut out of the camp or congregation, and who should be admitted into it. The people were commanded to inquire of the law at their mouth; “even all the statutes which the Lord had spoken by the hand of Moses.”

Spencer devotes a chapter to the consideration of the question, By what means the Almighty, being in heaven, administered the government over Israel? His answer

* Exodus xiii. 21. Numbers x. 35, 36.

comprehends the following heads:—1st, that the Omnipotent ruled his people by means of the laws judicial and ritual which he himself had enacted; 2dly, through the instrumentality of oracles, those supernatural indications vouchsafed to them by Urim and Thummim whenever they were oppressed by doubt or calamity; 3dly, by the services of his priests, more especially of the successors of Aaron; and lastly, by the piety, prudence, and fortitude of distinguished men, raised up to discharge great public duties, and endowed for that purpose with prophetic gifts. For example, we find that, during the insurrection of the Benjaminites, “the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up first.”*

As the polity of the Hebrews was founded on religion, and as the administration of the government, in all cases of doubt or danger, was guided by a reference to the will of Heaven, it necessarily followed that the chief power should be lodged in the hands of the priesthood. ‘The high pontiff’, in virtue of his office, was in fact the first minister of the great king. Hence the reason why Jehovah promised to the Israelites that they should be to him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation; their political constitution in this and many important respects being entirely different from that of every other people. It was not therefore without reason that Josephus, in his reply to Apion, asks, “Where shall we find a better or more righteous constitution than ours, which

* Judges xx. 18. Spencer. *Dissertatio de Theologia Judaica*, c. 1, sect. 3. This author observes, “Cum Deo visum esset humano more cum Hebrais agere, et *Regis* aut *Imperatoris* civilis nomen et officium gerere, sic temporum illorum conditioni sese accommodavit, ut ad munus illud modo et forma in principum electione et inauguratione usitatis admitti non recusaret.

makes us esteem God to be the governor of the universe, and permits the priests in general to be the administrators of the principal affairs, while, on the other hand, it confides a superintendence over them to the wisdom of the high priest their superior? Where shall any thing more perfect be discovered, or from what people shall we borrow statutes more beneficial to those who are governed? Our legislator did not advance the priests to the dignity they hold on account of their riches or any exterior advantage attached to their lot, but solely on account of their learning, which enables them to persuade others to prudent conduct and to righteousness of life. These functionaries had committed to them by Moses the execution of the laws, ritual and municipal; for, as they were the constant witnesses of men's actions, they were made the judges in all doubtful cases, and the punishers of those who had incurred the penalty of transgression.*

In a word, it is manifest that the polity framed by Moses was strictly sacerdotal, and that every other authority was meant to be subordinate to the power originally vested in the family of Aaron. Viewed in a merely secular light this arrangement will appear to have possessed many advantages; of which one of the most obvious is the restraint which it placed upon the ambition of a military chief, who could not in any case involve the nation in war without the consent of the spiritual estate, whose habits and interests would generally incline them to peace.

The nature and object of the Jewish theocracy are so clearly indicated in Holy Scripture that the learned have not differed much in their opinion respecting them: but there certainly has not been the same unity of sentiment among authors with respect to the sanctions by which its

* Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. ii. c. 23.

provisions were enforced. The speculations of Bishop Warburton on this subject are familiar to every reader ; constituting, in fact, the main principles of his hypothesis relative to the divine mission of Moses as the lawgiver of the Israelites. He maintained that, as the knowledge of future reward and punishment was withheld from the sons of Jacob, the laws of God were pressed upon their obedience by a special administration of Providence which visited with temporal good the actions of the righteous, and inflicted immediate pain or loss upon the heads of those who did evil. This system of instant and condign retribution is represented as extending not only to the state in general, but also to private men in particular ; “ because as an extraordinary providence over the state necessarily follows God’s being their *tutelary deity*, so an extraordinary providence to particulars follows as necessarily from his being the *supreme magistrate*.”*

As to the former, there cannot be the slightest doubt in the mind of any one who has perused the Old Testament with suitable knowledge and attention ; for, though divines have arrived at different conclusions concerning the extent of the revelation made to the ancient Hebrews with regard to the things after death, it is universally admitted that their government was strictly theocratical, and conducted by a series of miraculous interpositions on the part of Jehovah. As long as they adhered to the terms of the covenant they were blessed with prosperity ; but when they deviated from their allegiance to the omnipotent Sovereign, and offered adoration to other gods, the countenance of Heaven was withdrawn, their tribes were defeated by the pagan enemy, famine thinned their tents, the wild beast, the locust, and the caterpillar were sent upon their fields, the vine lan-

guished, the olive faded, and the herd was cut off from the stall. In such cases, indeed, it must be extremely difficult to draw a perceptible line between personal punishment and national retribution; but the argument is much more conclusive when applied to the latter than to the former, because it is only when an offence is committed by the people at large against a fundamental law of the constitution that the power of the chief ruler is justly invoked to chastise their contempt of his authority.

In the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, the bishop sees evidence not only that an "equal providence" was administered to individuals, but also an earnest desire on the part of the wise king that the covenant between God and his people might remain for ever inviolate, and the old economy be still continued. "When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; yet if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin when thou dost afflict them: then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk; and send rain upon thy land which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance. If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore, or whatsoever sickness there be: then what prayer, or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore, and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house: then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men;) that they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways,

so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.”*

If this eloquent passage be read free from the bias of theory, it will, I am satisfied, appear to carry its principal reference to national transgression, and more especially the great crime of forsaking the covenant and the worship of Jehovah. The conditions of pardon specified by the pious sovereign are, that the people “shall return and confess thy name, and pray toward this holy place;” alluding, in the plainest language, to their idolatrous propensities whereby they forsook the good way in which their Creator had taught them to walk. Nor is there in this prayer any other specialty which would render it unsuitable even for a christian congregation; among whom the equal providence described by the learned prelate is not expected, and who look to the future world only for a full recompense of the deeds done in their mortal bodies.

The period, we are told, when the theocracy was in its greatest vigour was that during which the Judges exercised the supreme power over Israel. From the death of Joshua to the reign of Saul the ways of Providence, it is said, were shaped so closely according to the character of individuals, that sickness and health, as well as riches and poverty, were distributed in the exact proportion of every one's merits. In such circumstances there could be no room for complaint that the ways of God were not equal, for in all cases the amount of prosperity must have appeared as the measure of moral excellence, and none but the bad would be reduced to suffering, whether in mind or body.

It is nevertheless extremely doubtful whether facts will be found to correspond with this hypothesis even during the four hundred years when the theocratical principle is sup-

posed to have operated with the smallest degree of obstruction. For example, in the history of Elimelech, who, in the days that the Judges ruled, went with his wife and his two sons to sojourn in the land of Moab, we perceive no such traces of crime as would justify the infliction of the deep distress with which they were visited in the country of their exile. After losing her husband and two children, the widow returned to her native city ; and when she saw the inhabitants moved at the sight of her sorrow, “ she said unto them, call me not Naomi, call me Mara : for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty : why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me ?* ”

Nor is an equal providence more manifest in the case of Jephthah’s daughter, whose painful destiny, in whatever light it may be viewed, had no apparent connection with her personal character. The same remark may be applied to the history of Samson, and even to that of Eli’s sons, all of whom were guilty of very great sins long before death overtook them ; and their fate, at the last, could hardly be regarded as a direct punishment for their transgressions. Crime, no doubt, is the parent of suffering under all forms of the divine government ; but in none of the instances now specified can we perceive any closer relation between the cause and the effect than such as might be expected to occur in the ordinary condition of the human race. The theocracy, therefore, must be understood to have been confined to the national interests of the Jews ; to have secured happiness and peace to them so long as they continued stedfast in their religious faith, while it brought upon their heads the visitation of divine wrath, the avenging sword, the famine or the

* Ruth i. 20—21.

pestilence, so often as they gave themselves up to the superstitions of the heathen, and thereby violated the covenant to which their fathers had sworn.

Bishop Warburton himself acknowledges that, after the days of the Judges, the evidences of an equal providence become much less distinct. When the people had rebelliously demanded a king, and their folly was so far complied with that God suffered the theocracy to be administered by a viceroy, there was then, says he, “as was fitting, a great abatement in the vigour of this *extraordinary* providence; partly in natural consequence, God being now farther removed from the immediate administration, and partly in punishment of their rebellion. And soon after this it is that we find them beginning to make their observations and complaints of *inequality*. From hence to the time of the captivity the extraordinary providence kept gradually decaying, till, on their full re-establishment, it entirely ceased.”*

There are few persons who reflect on the object contemplated by the Divine wisdom in the separation of the Jewish people who will agree with this learned author, that the “extraordinary providence” under which they were placed gradually decayed towards the time of the captivity, and entirely ceased after the return from Babylon. As it was the purpose of Heaven, by means of certain rites and ordinances, to restrict that nation to a peculiar faith until the world should be prepared for the reception of a more exalted belief and clearer views of the future condition of mankind, the special superintendence which began with Abraham was not withdrawn from his descendants amidst the numerous changes of their fortune, whether in freedom or in bondage, and has not even yet altogether terminated. It is true that their separation is no longer maintained by signs and wonders, by a

* Divine Legation of Moses, book v. sec. 4.

mighty hand and a stretched-out arm. Miracles were in a great degree suspended after the Hebrew families crossed the Jordan and were put in possession of the promised land; for, subsequently to that event, the ordinary exercise of political wisdom, aided by the light of sacerdotal revelations, was sufficient to regulate their affairs in peace and to strengthen their arms in war. On this ground we may perhaps explain the gradual withdrawing of supernatural agency, which was no longer exercised except on very momentous occasions; when it seemed necessary to remind the chosen tribes that the Lord Jehovah, who had parted the Red sea, dried the channel of the river, and made the sun stand still in the firmament, was still their guardian and their judge.

But the equal providence as applied to individuals—so far as individuals can be distinguished from a whole people—can hardly be said to have been withdrawn, because there is no indisputable proof that it was ever exercised. Even if we direct our attention to the Israelites at the time when miracles were most frequent among them, we shall not find that either reward or punishment was extended to every man and woman according to the exact measure of their deserts. For example, in consequence of the rebellion of Korah, two sore judgments were sent upon the congregation; in the first of which, all who appertained to the discontented faction, their wives, their sons, and their little children, were swallowed up, and went down alive into the pit; and in the second, fourteen thousand and seven hundred died of a pestilential disease which was used by their Almighty Sovereign as an instrument of wrath. It will not be asserted that all who perished on those two occasions were equally guilty because they all suffered an equal punishment. The wives and the children could have no share in the rebellion; their pride could not have been offended by the pretensions of the sons of Levi, neither could their

ambition be mortified by the pre-eminence conferred on the hereditary priesthood. Again, no one will maintain that all the six hundred thousand men whom Moses conducted into the wilderness of Sinai were chargeable with the same degree of ingratitude and disobedience, because they were all doomed to perish in the howling waste ; far less could such a conclusion be formed respecting the mixed multitude, the females and young persons who followed the host, and whose number must have greatly exceeded that of their armed protectors. In truth, the second commandment, which visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, is itself a proof that the administration of the Israelites was not meant to be conducted by an equal providence strictly so called ; it being obvious that the progeny of bad men are not necessarily wicked, nor in all cases justly liable to endure the punishment denounced against their parents. But, as the purpose of the statute was national and meant to be subservient to a great object, individual interests were sacrificed to the general good, nearly on the same principle that our constitutional law extends the penalties of treason to the offspring of the criminal. We may therefore conclude that the argument of Warburton is defective, where he attempts to prove that the Hebrews were governed by a providence so equal and discriminating as to recompense the work of the hand and the thought of the heart by an immediate return of temporal good or evil.

In no part of his great work, indeed, is the Bishop's reasoning less satisfactory than where he maintains that the extraordinary providence was applied to individuals in such a way that " no transgressor escaped, nor any observer of the law missed his reward." This, he asserts, was the state of the Jews under the theocracy ; and hereby, he adds, " human affairs might be kept in good order without the doc-

trine of future rewards and punishments." Temporal sanctions were, no doubt, the instrument whereby the Almighty was pleased to conduct the Hebrew administration, so far as the commonwealth at large was concerned ; happiness was to follow the due observance of the national statutes, while misery was pronounced against disobedience. If they venerated the commandments, Jehovah promised to raise them " high above all nations which he had made, in praise, in name, and in honour ;" and if enemies rose up against them, he would cause them to be smitten. On the other hand, if they grew negligent of their law, or " went aside from any of the words commanded them, to serve other gods," then the Lord was to send " cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that they set their hand unto for to do, until they should be destroyed utterly." These blessings and curses were general and national, agreeably to the character of a *king* and of a legal administration ; such, in short, as related to them as a *people*, and not to particular *persons*.

It is admitted by the Bishop, that after the accession of the house of David to the throne of Judah, the theocracy became less manifest in its operation, and that the sacred writers themselves frequently speak of the inequality of providence to individuals " in such manner as men living under a common providence are accustomed to speak." They complain of the prosperity of the wicked and the ill success of good men ; that all things come alike to all ; that there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and clean, and to the unclean ; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not : as is the good so is the sinner, and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath. Nay, the inspired author of the seventy-third Psalm remarks, that on this ground his " feet were almost gone, his steps had well nigh slipped." And why ? His answer is, " I was grieved at the wicked. I do also see the

ungodly in such prosperity. They come in no misfortune like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Lo, these are the ungodly, these prosper in the world, and these have riches in profusion; then I said, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency." The complaint of Jeremiah, again, is so strong that it is inconceivable how he should have made it, had he lived under an extraordinary providence as applicable to individuals. "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them; yea, they have taken root: they grow; yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouths, and far from their hearts."*

If from these general lamentations we descend to particular cases, it may be asked, why was Josiah slain before he had attained the fortieth year of his age, when "like unto him there was no king before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses, neither after him arose there any like him?" And in much earlier days, when Solomon had forsaken God and worshipped Astaroth, Chemosh, and Milcom, yet he was continued "prince all the days of his life;" and the kingdom was taken out of his son's hands to be given to Jeroboam, a ruler so idolatrous and wicked, that his name was ever afterwards used as the emblem of superstitious depravity. If we go still higher, to that remote period when all agree that the theocracy was in its full force, we see recorded the crime of Achan, who stole

* Jeremiah xii. 1. 2.

a wedge of gold and sinned against the Lord, and the consequence was the discomfiture of the Hebrew army under Joshua by the inhabitants of Ai. The transgression was confined to one man, while the punishment was extended to the whole congregation of Israel.

Dr Sykes observed, that these are indeed remarkable instances of an “extraordinary equal providence,” where no transgressor could escape punishment nor good man miss his reward. To explain these facts, we are reminded by the author of the Divine Legation that particular men complain of *inequalities in events*, which were, notwithstanding, the effects of a most *equal providence*; such as the punishment of posterity for the crimes of their forefathers, and of subjects for their kings.

But we may be still permitted to ask, what is the difference between an equal and an unequal providence, if good children are punished for bad fathers, and good subjects for bad kings? Leaving out all reference to the justice, goodness, or impartiality of such a rule, we may nevertheless question its consistency with an extraordinary providence, the object of which is to determine rewards and punishments according to the real deservings of particular individuals. “These sheep,” exclaimed David, when he was charged with transgression, “what have they done?” It is not enough to answer as Warburton has answered, on the hypothesis he adopted of an immediate and peculiar administration of divine justice, that “the subjects were punished for their king.” Where there is no guilt there cannot be any punishment due; and if kings act wickedly, and their subjects are innocent, how can the latter be punished, or even be permitted to suffer, in a state where penal retributions are supposed to be dispensed according to the exact share which every individual has had in the crime which calls forth the wrath of Heaven. If David sinned, he alone, agreeably to

the real spirit of the theocracy defined by the Bishop, ought to have suffered, and not his subjects, whom he himself describes as innocent sheep, who were not in any degree chargeable with the offence which brought so heavy a visitation upon Israel. In short, if the consequences of such an administration were that the innocent must be involved in the crimes of the guilty, we should find it impossible to determine wherein the equal providence, on which it is said to be founded, differs from one that is confessedly unequal.*

Besides, as we have seen, the sacred writers themselves complain that the good were not always rewarded according to their goodness, nor the wicked recompensed after their iniquities. This fact, which encumbers the ingenious reasoning that every one must have admired in the fifth book of the Divine Legation, cannot be explained by the learned author on the principles he has assumed for the basis of his system. To weaken the force of an objection at once so obvious and weighty, he suggests that when the inspired penmen “speak of the inequality of providence and the unfit distribution of things, they sometimes mean that state of it among their pagan neighbours, and not in Judea.” If so, then we must conclude that the writer of the seventy-third Psalm had studied the course of events among the heathen and not among his countrymen the Hebrews; and also that he who lived under an *equal* providence, where the wicked were constantly punished and the good as constantly rewarded, was perplexed when he perceived that where there was *no equal* providence the wicked were prosperous and the good suffered. Did he not know the difference between Israel and the Gentiles among whom they dwelt? Was he not

* An Examination of Mr Warburton's Account of the Conduct of the Ancient Legislators, of the Double Doctrine of the old Philosophers, of the Theocracy of the Jews, and of Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology. By Arthur Ashley Sykes, D.D. Pp. 198, 199.

aware that God was the King of the Hebrews, and that he stood not in the same relation to any other people? How, then, could he be so much surprised at the prosperity of the wicked in the heathen world, where there was no theocracy and no pretension to an equal providence?

But that the remark of the Psalmist was made with a direct allusion to the aspect of affairs in his own country, is manifest from the reflections which follow it. The success of the ungodly had almost led him to say, "then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. Yea, I had almost said even as they; but, lo! then I should have condemned the generation of thy children;" I should have given just offence to them by publishing so injurious a falsehood against thy people. It is obvious that the Jews could not have been offended had he merely proclaimed the melancholy evidence of there being an unequal providence among the pagans; because it could not have been thence inferred that the sons of Israel led bad lives and yet were prosperous. But if we suppose that he was tempted to adopt the sceptical conclusion mentioned by him, because he actually saw in the land of Judea much worldly success associated with very licentious habits, we shall then understand why his argument should offend the generation of God's children. It would have been regarded as a calumny upon the divine administration of which they were the special objects; and for this reason he concluded by assuring them, that though judgment against an evil work might not in every instance be speedily executed, yet in the end the retribution would take place, and the wicked would consume, perish, and come to a fearful end.*

Much less can the reflection made by Solomon in the Book of Ecclesiastes be supposed to relate exclusively to

* Sykes' Examination, p. 194.

the Gentiles. That the ways of God are inscrutable even to a wise man is a common observation ; and on this account the inspired author declares, that no one could judge of either love or hatred by any thing which was before him upon earth, since all things come alike to all, and there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked. Pursuing the argument farther, he adds to his solemn reflection the painful acknowledgment that “ this is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all.” In this respect there is no exception in favour of Israel ; for he maintains in general terms that “ the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill ; but time and chance happeneth to them all.”*

Is it then in any degree probable that a wise man, himself under an extraordinary providence, would write in such a manner, use language so universal in its application, and hint not the slightest exception in favour of his own people ; who, according to the hypothesis now considered, were at that instant living in a state of society where no transgression escaped punishment, and no observer of the law missed his reward ? Did he not, I repeat, see the difference in this respect between the children of Israel and the heathen nations ; or if there was such a distinction as the theory of the Divine Legation requires, could the wise king of the Hebrews fail to advert to it when delineating the divine administration towards the human race ? Was there no hazard that his own subjects would be led into wrong notions concerning the mysterious providence whose peculiar blessings they were supposed to enjoy, by his propounding to them conclusions so extremely momentous in words altogether unrestricted ?

* Ecclesiastes ix. 3. 11.

These considerations being duly weighed, the reader will find cause to question the soundness of Bishop Warburton's principles as they respect an equal providence towards *individuals*, and also of his reasoning on the passages quoted from the Psalms and Ecclesiastes, where he insists that the holy penmen meant to limit their observations on the events of life to the heathen nations around Judea. That the special guardianship vouchsafed to the Jews, as well as the peculiar administration of reward and punishment whereby it was maintained, applied to them only in a *national capacity*, is a fact which will become more distinct the more closely the historical notices of the Old Testament are examined. As the object contemplated by Divine Wisdom was general, so were the means employed for its accomplishment; and hence we may conclude that, so far as a nation can be distinguished from the individuals who compose it, the ordinary rules of the moral government were not suspended with regard to the latter.

It cannot now be necessary to enter at great length into the question, long agitated by writers on this subject, relative to the period when the Jewish theocracy was brought to a close. Some are of opinion that it ended with the government peculiar to the Judges; a greater number maintain that it continued till the captivity; while a third class, with a better show of reason, hold the belief that it ceased not till the coming of Christ. In this case, as in most others, the controversy has been perpetuated owing to the want of precision in the use of language; the principal term being used by the contending parties in a variety of acceptations, not only different but even quite opposite in their import. The reasonings of those who restrict the word theocracy to the superintendence which Jehovah is supposed to have exercised as the *civil ruler* of the Israelitish nation, are not destitute of plausibility when they argue that such special

administration must have terminated when Solomon succeeded his father as a hereditary monarch.

On this ground Le Clerc asserts that God did not govern the Hebrew republic in quality of political head, except during the time they had no kings, or, at farthest, down to the period when the house of David was established on the throne of Judah. Throughout the whole of that period, he remarks, Jehovah discharged all the functions of king; was judge in the ordinary causes which came before the tribunals; gave answers through the medium of the oracle; regulated the march of the armies; occasionally sent his angel to explain his commands or execute his will; and, in fine, no one was obliged to give an implicit obedience except to the orders of Heaven. But as soon as kings were appointed in Israel, and the sovereignty was attached to the family of the son of Jesse, they became the absolute masters, and God ceased to perform the duties belonging to their office. Father Simon, on the contrary, adhered to the notion that the Jews never acknowledged any other chief than Jehovah alone, who in that capacity continued to govern even during the time that the monarchs of several dynasties were vested with the supreme authority. In his *Critical History of the Old Testament* he had remarked, that the republic of the Hebrews was in this respect different from all the other nations of the world; that it had never recognised for its head any but Jehovah alone, even at the time when it was subjected to kings. In support of this opinion, which was opposed by Le Clerc, he appeals to Scripture; remarking that Saul and David, when they became sovereigns, consulted God in all the more important affairs of state, exactly as he had been consulted under the Judges. I cannot comprehend, says he, what difference can be put between the rank of political chief which God held under the Judges, under Joshua for ex-

ample, and that which he held under the reign of Saul and David.*

These distinguished men, it is obvious, allowed themselves to fall into error by restricting too much the meaning of the word respecting the application of which they so eagerly disputed. The object of the theocracy, or of that Special Providence with which Josephus was pleased to identify it, was not directed so closely to the civil concerns of the Hebrews as to the maintenance of their Law, as a religious system intended to separate them from other nations. Hence, as already noticed, after they were settled in the land of Canaan miraculous interposition became less frequent than it was in the wilderness; and when the regal government was fully established, the administration of affairs fell into a course more nearly resembling the transactions of mankind in the ordinary circumstances of society. If we confine our attention to the motives which appear to have influenced the kings of Judah and of Israel, after the schism in the days of Rehoboam, we shall find nothing which may not be confidently ascribed to the usual feelings of ambition or revenge, which too often dictate the measures of princes in a rude age.

Nor is there in the succession of events which ultimately led to the fall of either kingdom, under the hands of the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs, any occurrence that might not be explained on the principles usually applied to the policy of conquering states. It had, in truth, become manifest, even to those among the Hebrews who were least influenced by pious impressions, that their independence would soon be annihilated either by the Egyptians or by the

* "Je ne comprends point quelle différence on peut mettre entre la qualité de Chef Politique que Dieu eut sous les Juges, par exemple sous Josué, et celle qu'il eut sous le règne de Saul et David."—*Réponse à la Défense des Sentimens de quelques Théologiens de Hollande*, p. 113.

great empire on the banks of the Euphrates; and, accordingly, the opinions of the leading men in Jerusalem were divided on the expediency of an alliance with the one or the other of these powers, in order to avert the catastrophe with which their tribes appeared to be threatened. In such circumstances, where the natural order of things was so seldom interrupted, and which finally produced the consummation which even a moderate degree of intelligence might have enabled any one to anticipate, it is absurd to represent Jehovah in the light of a "political chief," and as still discharging all the functions of a Jewish king. It is more decorous, as well as more consistent with the scriptural history, to regard the special providence, which the Almighty certainly extended to the Hebrews, as having for its main object the preservation of divine truth, and more especially that fundamental doctrine of all sound religion, the unity of God as the creator and governor of the world. The theocracy, viewed in this light, assuredly continued till the introduction of the Christian system, and even perhaps to the very end of the Jewish polity.

Most of our English divines concur in the opinion now stated, though their language may not in all cases be perfectly distinct. Michaelis, too, who treats this question more in the character of a civilian than of a theologian, arrives at a result which will not appear materially different, if due allowance be made for the freedom of his style, not always suitable to the gravity of his subject. He admits that in the time of Moses the theocracy was very conspicuous. God himself gave laws to the Israelites, decided difficult points of justice by oracles, was constantly visible in the pillars of cloud and fire, and inflicted punishments, not according to the secret procedure of Providence, but in the most open manner. He considers it, however, as a point not determined whether the Almighty in future ages merely

because the title of king was still applied to him, continued to interpose as often and as directly in the political government of the nation. When the law was revealed, its sanctions promulgated, and the authority of the ruler placed on a permanent ground, the theocratic sceptre, he also thinks, was gradually withdrawn.

He mentions as a circumstance which certainly did distinguish the people of Israel from all the other nations under the sun, namely, that God bound himself by promises and threatenings to reward them with prosperity, victory, and plenty, if they kept the law of Moses, and to punish them with defeat and other public calamities, if they disregarded it. “Now although God *sometimes* inflicts national judgments on other nations, to chastise their public iniquities, yet this is but seldom the case; and we can but rarely discriminate between such peculiar chastisements and any common calamity permitted by Providence without a special provocation of divine wrath; nor are the vicissitudes of defeat and victory invariably regulated by transgression and repentance. In this particular providence towards the Israelites God did indeed manifest himself as really their king; and yet as this did not at all affect the form of their government and the management of their affairs, I do not think it necessary in speaking politically of their constitution to give it the new name of a theocracy, which is elsewhere quite unknown in politics; as if it were really a fourth form of government here discovered in addition to the three with which the world is familiar.”*

Perhaps the term we owe to Josephus does not very happily express the distinction that he meant to claim in favour of his own people, inasmuch as the whole system of divine providence—the moral legislation to which all classes and

* Commentaries on the Laws of Moses, vol. i. p. 196.

denominations of the human race are subjected—is in point of fact a theocracy. It is no doubt true that the employment of the priesthood as the ministers of Jehovah, in municipal affairs as well as in religious rites, gave to the Jewish polity more the aspect of a sacred institution than could belong to any form of government among the heathen ; but if the conception of a theocratical rule be carefully analyzed and reduced to its first principles, it will be found to coincide very nearly with the more common impression of God's superintendence over all his rational creatures. The objection made by Michaelis to the Greek word, compounded by the Jewish annalist, would not merit the slightest consideration, did it represent, free from all ambiguity, the notion which the latter meant to convey when he introduced it into his text. As, however, it may seem to imply something different from a special providence, and thereby introduce into the mind a confusion of ideas respecting the state of society in the Hebrew kingdoms, the use of it in theological discussion might perhaps without any inconvenience be entirely laid aside.

Even the distinction made by Dr Spencer of a *natural* and a *civil* theocracy, does not altogether remove the obscurity of thought to which the Gottingen professor objects ; because there seems to be a certain incongruity in restricting the administration of the Omnipotent to any particular form, and even in regarding him as the king, properly so called, of any portion of the human race. But in such circumstances the remark of Warburton will recommend itself to the consideration of the reader, namely, that it was “ in the indulgence of their prejudices concerning a tutelary god,” that the Almighty deigned to institute a theocracy among the Israelites. The reflection of the author of the learned work on the Ritual Laws of the Hebrews is much to the same effect : “ When it pleased God,” says he, “ to

act with this people after the manner of men, and to bear the name and office of king and civil ruler, he accommodated himself to the condition of those times.”* It is also deserving of especial notice, as already stated at some length, that the relation the Almighty condescended to assume with the descendants of Jacob formed the basis of all those statutes against idolatry, without which the unity of the divine nature and the true worship of Jehovah could not have been perpetuated in the very centre of a dominant superstition.

With respect to the duration of the theocracy, taken in the more ordinary sense of a special providence, there can be no doubt that it extended down to the time of Christ without any interruption. Bishop Warburton seems to hold the same opinion; and yet the peculiar notions he attached to the Jewish government, as a system under which no transgressor of the Law escaped and no observer of it missed his reward, led him to acknowledge that it was gradually withdrawn, and at length entirely ceased some hundreds of years before the era of the Christian redemption. Under the Judges, he asserts, the ways of Providence in regard to immediate retribution were perfectly equal; and during that period of the theocracy, he adds, “we hear no complaints of inequality.” The wise who then reasoned on the fortunes of mankind, did not lament the absence of all distinction between the righteous and the wicked, on the grounds assumed by the Psalmist and the author of Ecclesiastes. But when, in compliance with the wishes of the people, the external form of the government was changed, the regal authority passed in a great measure into the hands of the king; who, in respect of the theocracy, discharged, as it were, the office of lieutenant under Jehovah. In such circumstances,

* See note p. 510, and the *Dissertatio de Theocratia Judaica*, p. 254, &c.

the *extraordinary* providence did not manifest itself either so frequently or by so vigorous a mode of interposition as in former times. No sooner, therefore, had the monarchy been confirmed in the house of David than the Hebrews began to utter their lamentations over the unequal distribution of good and evil ; and this state of things, says Warburton, continued till their return from Babylon, when the special providence entirely ceased.*

But as this learned author, in the preceding section of the same book, had maintained that the theocracy continued even to the coming of Christ, it follows that he admitted a distinction between this species of rule and an extraordinary providence. The theocracy, he insists, could not have been abolished without dissolving the whole frame of the republic ; since all the laws whether as to their equity, force, or fitness, as well as the whole ritual of worship, respected God as the civil governor. But neither, he argues, by the declaration of any prophet nor by the act of any good king did the institution suffer the least change in any of its parts, from the time of its establishment by Moses to its dissolution by Jesus Christ, either by addition, correction, or abrogation. Consequently, he concludes, the theocracy was existing throughout that whole period ; nothing being more absurd than to suppose that national laws, all made in reference to the form of government, should remain invariable while the government itself was changed.

According to the views exhibited in this portion of his work, the Bishop holds that the Jewish theocracy was finally abolished by our Saviour in his quality of priest as well as in that of king. “ For,” says he, “ as we learn from the history of his ministry, he came as heir of God, to succeed immediately, without any interregnum, in his Father’s kingdom ; God having *delivered up* to his Son the kingdom of

* Divine Legation, book v. sec. iv. p. 147.

which the Father was, till then, in possession. And this change in the government, from the *temporal theocracy* of God the Father to the *spiritual kingdom* of God the Son, was made in the same solemn and authentic manner in which that theocracy was introduced.”—“ This abolition of the theocracy by the Son of God I take to be the true completion of that famous prophecy of Jacob of which so much hath been written and disputed. ‘ The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come ;’ that is to say, the theocracy shall continue over the Jews until Christ come to take possession of his Father’s kingdom: for there never was any lawgiver in Judah but God, by the ministry of Moses, until the coming of his Son.”*

Without questioning the accuracy of the interpretation just given, the reader will perceive that there is some inconsistency in the argument by which an attempt is made to separate the theocracy from an extraordinary providence. In the beginning of section fourth, the author maintains that “ one necessary consequence of a theocratic form of government was an extraordinary providence. For the affairs of a people under a theocracy being administered by God as king, and his peculiar and immediate administration being what we call an *extraordinary providence*, it follows that an extraordinary providence must needs be exercised over such a people. My meaning is, that if the Jews were indeed under a theocracy, they were indeed under an extraordinary providence: And if a theocracy was only pretended, yet an extraordinary providence must necessarily be pretended likewise. In a word, they must be either both true or both false, but still inseparable in reality or idea.”†

If a theocracy and an extraordinary providence be inse-

* Divine Legation, book v. sec. iii. p. 97.

† Ibid., book v. sec. iv. p. 117.

parable even in idea, in what way shall we explain the assertion of the same vigorous writer that the latter “ kept gradually decaying” from the accession of Saul down to the captivity, and that upon the full re-establishment of the Israelites in their own land it entirely ceased ? This apparent contradiction seems to have had its origin in the fruitless attempt to distinguish two things which have no real difference. The term theocracy, as used by Josephus, denoted nothing more than an extraordinary providence, administered by Jehovah, who for reasons already mentioned condescended to be known amongst the Hebrews as their lawgiver and king. If, then, the theocratical government continued till the time of Christ, so did the special superintendence which was its chief characteristic ; for, regarding the two phrases as only different forms of expression for the same thing, we may adopt the words of Warburton, and maintain that they are inseparable in idea as well as in reality.

¶ The Bishop was not at all times sufficiently free from haste and bias to do justice either to his own arguments or to those of his opponents. For example, his reply to Dr Sykes on the several questions respecting an *equal* providence,—under which the bad man was always punished, and the good never missed his reward,—is neither candid nor satisfactory. He seizes minute points and casual remarks, not at all connected with the general bearing of the controversy, and reasoning upon them in his own way, draws inferences which his antagonist would have been the first to repudiate. Sykes could not discover in the Scriptures any proof of a special providence towards individuals either while the judges ruled, or after the establishment of the kingdom ; whereas, in the writings of the most pious and eloquent of their prophets, complaints are numerous touching the unequal distribution of the good and evil things of the present world. But Warburton, merely because his hypothesis

seemed to require such an administration of reward and punishment, contemns the suggestions of his modest adversary, and even labours to overwhelm him with ridicule.

It is less surprising that he should have attacked Bayle and other sceptics, whose works could not but appear at once dangerous and offensive in the eyes of every orthodox believer. Still, even in carrying on war against an avowed enemy, it is incumbent on the champion of truth to use lawful weapons. Writing relative to the nature of a certain penal statute in the Jewish code, the author of the *Philosophical Commentary* remarks, that the law of Moses gives no toleration to idolaters and false prophets, whom it punishes with death. Whence it follows, says he, that all the reasons I have employed in the first part of this treatise prove nothing because they prove too much ; namely, that the literal sense of the law of Moses, as far as it relates to the punishment of opinions, would be impious and abominable. Therefore, he concludes, since God, without violating the eternal order of things, could command the Jews to put false prophets to death, it follows evidently that he could, under the gospel also, command sound believers to inflict the same punishment upon heretics.

Bayle does not conceal that he considers this objection to be strong, and even declares he knows some who have no greater difficulty to hinder their believing that God was the author of the laws of Moses than the intolerance here enjoined, so contrary to our clearest ideas of natural equity. But he proceeds immediately after to remove the difficulty in question, and precisely on the ground occupied at a later period by Locke and Warburton himself. The persons to whom he alludes were wont to exclaim, why put a man to death for persuading his neighbour to worship another Divinity which in his judgment he believed to be a true one ? " Because," says he, " by that *particular* form of govern-

ment, and in that *theocracy* under which the people of Israel lived, this was *an overt-act of high treason*; it was an attempt of *rebellion* against the *sovereign magistrate*. Now, since order eternal and immutable confers a power on the magistrate of punishing *treason* and *rebellion*, and whatever tends to the *overthrowing* the *constitution*, it is plain that, God being once constituted head of the Jewish commonwealth, whoever should afterwards alienate his *own allegiance*, or endeavour to draw others away, deserved to die as a *traitor* and *rebel*. Nor will it avail him that in so doing he followed the light of his conscience; this being a singular case in which God, by an extraordinary appointment, that of a theocratical government among the Jews, derogates from the privileges of conscience. The crime in this case becomes punishable by the *secular* arm, as being treason and rebellion against the state.”*

After this distinct explanation of the principle on which the penal laws of Moses against idolatry were founded, it was not honest on the part of the learned author of the *Divine Legation* to assert that Bayle “dwelt with pleasure on this circumstance as he thought it favoured his darling scepticism;” that “the solution of this difficulty was above his strength, had he been never so willing to reconcile scripture to reason;” and that “Judea was a mere *terra incognita* to this great adventurer.”†

But Dr Spencer had anticipated Bayle as well as Locke in supplying a solution of the supposed difficulty attending the enactment of a law, under the authority of Almighty God, which denounced against idolaters the punishment of death. He also shows that this penalty was inflicted upon them as rebels and traitors. “It is a great mistake,” says he,

* Bayle, *Commentaire Philosophique*, p. 132. Examination of Mr Warburton’s Account, &c. p. 163.

† *Divine Legation*, book v. sec. ii. p. 23—25.

“ to conclude from these statutes that it is lawful for us to take away the lives of idolaters and heretics ; for it is obvious to all, except such as a bitter zeal has entirely blinded, that God gave those laws to the Israelites, not as the Lord of the universe, but as Jehovah their king, who exercised in a visible and palpable manner the office of political ruler.”*

It is therefore manifest that Warburton acted unjustly towards some of his predecessors, both by concealing their services to the cause of theological learning, and by ascribing to them motives quite inconsistent with their avowed opinions. In the Commentary of Bayle and the Ritual Laws of Spencer there are indeed many objectionable passages ; but with respect to the reasons on which the penal statutes of the Mosaical economy were founded, these authors had arrived at the very same result whither the Bishop himself was afterwards carried by a more laborious process of argument. Nor did they fall into the mistake committed by the ingenious prelate, of embarrassing their conclusions by an attempt to establish a fanciful distinction between a theocracy and an extraordinary providence ; maintaining, in the first instance, that they were inseparable even in idea, and then acknowledging that the one entirely ceased several centuries before the other.†

* Dissertatio de Theocratia Judaica, 254. “ Dei regimen idololatriæ non parum obstitit, quatenus ipse, jure regio usus, leges tulit de idololatriæ morte mulcendis, utpote rebellibus et majestatis imminutæ manifestis. Inter leges eas locum haud obscurum tenet lex ea, quæ præcepit Deus, ut, civitatibus alicujus incolis idololatriæ compertis, homines et bestias omnes interficerent Israelitæ, civitatem ipsam cum bonis omnibus in cineres redigerent, nec urbem illam unquam restituerent. E legibus hisce perperam colligitur, quod nobis etiam in idololatrias et hæreticos ferro et flamma sævire liceat ; nam manifestum est e ceteris, nisi quos *ἐκλὴς τινες* occæcavit, Israelitas leges illas a Deo accepisse, non quatenus *Jehovah*, sed quatenus *Jehovah Stator* esset, et inter ceteros, instar regis politici, modo visibili et externo versaretur.”

† For a fuller view of the character of Bishop Warburton as a controversialist, I take leave to refer to a volume by the Rev. Thomas Bott, published in 1743, entitled, “ An Answer to the Rev. Mr Warburton’s

He who studies this interesting subject, guided by the light alone which is supplied in holy scripture, and with his eyes fixed on the main purpose of the Special Providence under which the Hebrews were placed, will form conclusions much more satisfactory than can be attained through the medium of any hypothesis however ingenious.

It will appear distinctly manifest, in the first place, that, from the call of Abraham down to the period when Jerusalem was sacked by the Romans, the Jews were a peculiar people; enjoying advantages denied for the time to other nations, and in many respects subjected to the control of the Almighty in a manner different from the common order of events. This extraordinary providence, as affecting the external condition of the Israelites, may perhaps be traced even in our own days; for although the sceptre has long departed from Judah, and the lawgiver has ceased to promulgate his statutes, the theocracy, taken in its more general sense, seems not yet to be entirely withdrawn.

In the second place, to the reflecting reader evidence will present itself sufficient to establish in his mind the important conclusion, that the special government exercised over the sons of Jacob did not interfere with their moral liberty so as to render them the mechanical instruments of the divine will. It will be found, on the contrary, that the tribes under Moses, Joshua, the Judges, and the Kings, showed on many occasions very little reverence for their Law, following rather the superstitious rites of the Gentiles among whom their lot was cast; insomuch, indeed, that, had not the watchful eye of Heaven prevented the fatal consummation,

Divine Legation of Moses, in three parts. In which are considered, 1. Some of his quotations from the Ancients. 2. His manner of reasoning: And 3, his notion of Moral Obligation." The strictures of Mr Bott on the "Quotations from the Ancients," are deserving of notice, as illustrating how much may be achieved by slight omissions and alterations on the text of an author whose works are not in every one's hands.

the knowledge of the true God, as the creator and judge of the world, would have been sunk in the total darkness of paganism. When their military chief, who had led their victorious bands across the Jordan, left them to choose whether they would worship Jehovah or the gods that their fathers served on the other side of the flood, they no doubt exclaimed, under the emotion of a temporary zeal, "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods!" But no sooner did the remembrance of the mighty works wrought for their sake in the wilderness and the land of Egypt wax faint in their minds, than they forsook Jehovah and followed Baal and Astaroth. It therefore required a constant miracle,—a frequent manifestation of almighty power,—to preserve among the Hebrews the precious deposit which was committed to their keeping; a species of superintendence, however, which did not diminish their freedom as moral agents, nor suspend their responsibility to the simple laws whereby their conduct in the ordinary affairs of life was regulated. Hence it becomes still more obvious, that the special or extraordinary providence which so long secured the existence of the Israelites as a separate people, applied to their national concerns rather than to their individual interests whether in civil or religious matters.

The careful student of Jewish history will, in the third place, see good ground for holding the belief that the ancient people of God were not ignorant of the great doctrine of the soul's immortality; but that, owing to a mixture of Gentile notions respecting the absorption of all spiritual substances in the Divine essence, and the tenet of the metempsychosis which seemed to perpetuate a material form, they had no distinct impression of future reward and punishment. Moses did not conceal from the congregation of Israel the sublime dogma of eternal life; he merely abstained from explaining to them the laws under which the human race

shall enjoy existence after their earthly nature shall have exhausted its powers, and their corruptible shall have put on incorruption. In short, as the government to which they were bound to render obedience was administered by temporal sanctions, it was not deemed necessary to found his system of legislation, ritual or moral, on the hopes and fears which respect the invisible world. But, notwithstanding this peculiarity in the religious condition of the Hebrews, it cannot admit of any doubt that they cherished a sincere belief in the imperishable nature of the thinking principle in man. The people who adored Jehovah as the God of their fathers could not be strangers to that enlivening persuasion which connects the brief pilgrimage of time with the abiding honours of a never-ending state. On this point I appeal to an authority which cannot be questioned. “As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead but of the living.”*

* Matthew xxii. 31—32.

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